THE RETURNE OF PRAYERS.

A TREATISE, WHEREIN THIS CASE

[*How to discerne Gods Answers to our Prayers*] is briefly resolved:

WITH

Other Observations upon *Psalm* 85. 8. concerning Gods speaking *Peace, &c.*

By THO: GOODWIN, *B. D.*

HAB. 2. 1.
I will watch to see what he will say to me.

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TO THE MUCH HONOURED KNIGHT Sir *NATHANIEL RICH.*

SIR,

God, who from all eternity hath had an infinite Maſs of grace and glory lying by him, to beſtow upon his Church: and did accordingly provide a treaſury and Magazin ſufficient wherein to ſtore up all, [the boſome of his Son] *in whom are* hid, riches *ſo* unſearchable, *as cannot be told over, much leſſe ſpent to all eternity:* Ephes. 3. 8.

He hath as richly ſhed his holy Spirit on us: that we, who *could never have* known *of any thing bequeathed us, nor* what to pray for as we ought, *might both fully from him* know all that God hath given us, *and through him lay claime thereto,* who maketh interceſſion for us; *and ſo doth furniſh us with a privy key to all that Treaſury, which otherwiſe, is faſt ſhut up to all the world.* πλουσίως. Tit. 3. 6.

Through which Spirit of Prayer *and* Supplications *thus* poureth forth, *beleevers come to be at once* anointed to the fellowſhip, *and execution of thoſe three glorious Offices of* Chriſt *their Head. Not only* [1] *of* Prieſts; *by* offering up *their prayers,* as ſpirituall ſacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jeſus Chriſt: *but* [2] *of* Kings; to rule with God. *Hoſ.* 11. 12. *Being hereby made of Privy Counſell to the King of Kings, ſo as* their Pſal. 20. 4, 5.

Counſels, *and deſires expreſt in* their petitions, *are*
Job 22.27,28. *ſaid to* be fulfilled, *and* their decrees *in their* Prayers
made, *ratified, and* eſtabliſht. *Nay further, by vertue*
of this priviledge, advanced to ſuch height of favour,
as by their ſtrength *in prayer alone,* to have power
with God *himſelfe, and not onely with him, but alſo*
over him, *and* in their wreſtlings to prevaile, *Yea to*
command: Himſelfe hath ſaid it; Thus ſaith the Lord,
the holy One of Iſrael and his maker, Aske of me,
of things to come, concerning my ſonnes, and con-
cerning the work of my hands, Command ye Me,
Iſai. 45.11. *which ſo tranſcendent priviledge of power,*
is likewiſe by the expreſſe words of this great Charter,
univerſally extended unto all tranſactions of this lower
part of his dominions; whether Eccleſiaſticall, which
doe concerne his ſonnes, *that is, his Church: or what*
ever other, the more ordinary workes of his hands, *that*
appertaine to common providence.

And for as much as theſe grand affairs of this his
Kingdome, *as future, and* to come, *are commended to*
their prayers, as their moſt proper ſubjects, about which
Mat. 6 10. *they are to treat,* Ask of me of things to come: *In*
this reſpect, they doe become as truly Prophets *alſo;*
though not in ſo full and compleat, yet in ſome kinde of
true reſemblance; not by foretelling, *yet by* foreſpea-
king *in their prayers, things that come to paſſe. To de-*
monſtrate which, God, who made and upholds this world,
Pſal. 75. 10. *and all things in it, by the word of his power, doth like-*
wiſe rule and governe it, by the Preſidents, and pre-
ſcript rules, of the word of his will: exactly diſpenſing
unto men, both rewards and puniſhments, according to
the tenor of ſome or other of his promiſes and threat-
nings, and former like proceedings therein recorded:
though

though with ſuch various liberty, in reſpect of the particulars, that his wayes *remaine* unſearchable and paſt finding out: *That look how he appointed in the heavens, thoſe Ordinances of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, by their light, heat, and motion,* to rule the day and night, *to* divide *and cauſe the ſeverall* ſeaſons *of the yeare, and all the changes and alterations that doe paſſe over this* animall *and* naturall *world. In like manner hath he ſtretched out that ſo* exceeding broad expanſe *of his word and law, (to which the Pſalmiſt doth aſſimilate it) over this* rationall *world, of Angels and Men; and therein ſets his* Statutes, *and his* Judgements, *that by the light of Precepts, and their influences in rewards and puniſhments, they might order and direct theſe his creatures reaſonable, and all their actions; alſo diſpoſe, and ſet out all the iſſues of them. And ſeeing his* Saints *they* are a people in whoſe hearts is his Law; *and their* delight *is to* meditate therein both day and night, *they daily calculating and* obſerving *the various aſpects, conjunctions, and mixt influences of thoſe innumerable precepts, promiſes and threatnings, which themſelves and others, Nations or men, ſtand under: and by a* Judgment *thence reſulting, ſo farre as they have attained, endeavouring to frame their ſupplications and petitions* according to Gods will: *Hence their prayers oft, full happily ſucceed, and aforehand doe accord, to thoſe iſſues and events, that afterwards fall out. That like as it ſometimes falls out, that the earth comes to be juſt under the Sunne and Moone, in ſome of their conjunctions; ſo their deſires and prayers, ſometimes in a direct line, fall under, and ſubordinately concurre with Gods ſecret purpoſes, and ſome revealed promiſe met in conjunction, to produce ſuch and ſuch effects.*

Pſal. 19. 1. 96.

Pſ. 19. 1, 2, 3, 4. compared with Rom. 10. 18.

Jer. 8. 7.

The Spirit *alſo, herein* helping their infirmities, *ſometimes ſo guiding and directing them, by a gracious preinſtinct, though unbeknown to them, to pitch their requeſts upon ſuch particulars, as God hath fully purpoſed to bring to paſſe; becoming thereby, as it were, the ſpirit of prophecy unto them; reſpectively, in ſome meaſure and degree.*

Thus doth that great King employ his neereſt ſervants, as his under-Officers, and Sheriffs to ſerve his Writs, and Executions upon his enemies, to execute the Judgement written *in his threatnings*, Pſal. 149. 9. *and to accompliſh his mercies written alſo, by putting all the promiſes in ſuit; to be as man-midwives (as* Hezekiahs *alluſion, when he ſent a viſiting to the Prophet* Eſay, *for his voyce and ſuffrage, ſeemeth to import) to help and aſſiſt his promiſes and* decrees *in their travel with mercies and deliverance, when theſe* their children doe come unto the birth, and there is no ſtrength to bring them forth.

Eſay 37. 2, 3, 4. Zeph. 2. 2.

In all which, they ſhall therefore have the honour to be accounted Co-workers together with God, in his greateſt works, of wonder. And at the latter day, when that great and laſt Edition, both of all Gods works, and likewiſe ours, then compleat and finiſhed, ſhall be publiſhed to all the world, they ſhall finde their names put to them, together with his own; and the ſame by him acknowledged, to be as truly the works of their hearts and prayers, as that they are the ſole work of his hands and power, Such honour have all his Saints.

And if all the workes of God *are ſo* exceeding great, and his thoughts *therein ſo* very deep, *Pſal.* 92. 5. *that every Iota of them, doth deſerve our deepeſt ſtudies, and intentions; and thereunto require a proper*

skill

skill and wiſdome, *to read his hand peculiar unto the Saints, v. 6. whereunto there muſt be adjoyned the moſt* diligent ſearch, *and attentive obſervation to finde out his meaning in them; and withall a ſpeciall inclination, and* delight *to be converſant therein,* Thy workes are very great, ſought out of thoſe that have pleaſure in them, *Pſal.* 111.2. *And if, of all the reſt, thoſe choicer pieces, his workes of mercy may challenge our beſt regard: in which his heart and* delights are moſt; *on which his Wiſdome hath laid on the richeſt workmanſhip, in the moſt curious contrivements of his love: Then ſurely that ſelected volume of more ſpecial mercies* [His Epiſtles] *vouchſafed in anſwer to our prayers, is above all other, moſt exactly to be ſtudied, and moſt diligently to be peruſed by us. Wherein* God *doth unboſome himſelf, and lay open his heart, more ſweetly, more familiarly unto us; which are directed, and in manner dedicated more particularly unto our ſelves alone; Many of them written with his own hand, in a more immediate manner diſcovered and appearing in them: and all of them come ſealed with the impreſſe of everlaſting love, and down laden with the encloſure of the moſt precious tokens of his ſpeciall favour.* Who ſo is wiſe, will obſerve theſe things; and they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſſe of the Lord. Pſ.77.9. Mic.7.18. Pſ.107.34.

Neither have ſuch favours, onely more of mercy in the things themſelves beſtowed, but are further endeared to us, by being made our own mercies, *by a more peculiar title to them: by which the kindneſſe in them is rendered double. For therein we have that royall liberty to become our own chooſers, and contrivers of our owne condition; having all the promiſes thrown downe to us, with blanks for us to write our names in which of them*

wee

we pleaſe; which is the greateſt liberty. And we have withall his Spirit *ſecretly directing, and fixing the needle of our deſires, to the ſame point, wherein his great intentions towards us doe meet with our beſt good: which is indeed the trueſt liberty. And to be made our ſelves, whom we love ſo well, and therefore delight to doe good unto, the chiefeſt inſtruments under him of our own greateſt happineſſe, is a priviledge, then which, the creature is not made capable of a more tranſcendent royalty. And yet when the greateſt love, thus rectified, which poßibly we can beare our ſelves, hath* opened its mouth wideſt, *and ſtretched our deſires in praying, to their utmoſt compaſſe, then will* Gods *infinite vaſt love, not onely* fill *them, but* doe for us above all that we are able to aske, *yea* to think; exceeding abundantly above all; *as* far *above as* his thoughts are above our thoughts, *which is* far *more* then the heavens are higher then the earth.

All which, when put together (if well conſidered,) how would it provoke us to call in all the precious ſtock of our time, thoughts and intentions which we caſt away on trifles, to lay out the choiceſt portion of them in this thriving trade of entercourſe with God; the returns *whereof* are better then the merchandize of ſilver, and the gaine thereof, then fine gold. *It is the praying Chriſtian that alone employes the riches of the promiſes, which we uſually let lie by us like dead ſtock unimproved: whileſt he like a* Wiſe *and diligent* Merchant, *looks abroad upon all the affaires of Jeſus Chriſt, that are afloat here in this world, and adventures in them all; is watchfull to ſpie out all advantages, and with an holy* πραγμοσύνη, intermedleth in every buſineſſe *that may bring in glory unto God, good unto the Church, grace and comfort*

comfort to his owne ſoule. And how infinitely rich muſt that man needs become, that puts even Gods riches out to uſe, with the increaſe *of* ten Talents for one, *yea* an hundred fold !

The due eſtimate whereof, would no leſſe quicken us to as diligent an inquiry, what becomes of all thoſe goodly adventures, the prayers we make; to liſten what haven they arrive at, how, and when, and with what fraught they doe returne.

In which great duty, and moſt neceſſary property of all true Merchants, yet many of the beſt and greateſt dealers, that are diligent enough in praying, are ſtill found failing and deficient; that omit no gainefull opportunity of adventure, but are careleſſe and unobſervant of their returnes.

Some *through ignorance* (*it may be*) *that this is at all a duty, or of any ſuch importance, are carefull onely how to lade in prayers enough, not expecting to finde ony* of this bread caſt upon the waters, *untill that great and generall* returne *of themſelves and all the world,* with joy bringing their ſheaves with them. Others, *though at preſent, many of their prayers come home* after a few dayes, *and richly laden; yet through want of skill to read thoſe Bills of Exchange which God often writes in an obſcurer Character, they lie unregarded by them.* Many *when voyages prove long, (though to their greater advantage, when once they doe returne, yet in the meane time) through diſcouragement, they give all for loſt, as we doe ſhips at Sea we cannot heare of. The* moſt *are commonly complaining, that their adventures ſtill miſcarry, and that little or nothing comes of all their prayers. And* All *are negligent of keeping their Books of Accounts, to caſt up their commings in, and go-*

ings out, the one with the other. By which they loſe the chiefeſt portion of that comfort, which for the preſent, God *hath here alloted us to live upon, [the revenues of their prayers :] And* God *alſo, is not onely* robbed *of that cuſtome of his glory which ſhould thence accrew, but* wronged *alſo by ſtanding ſtill as* debtor *in their accounts to many prayers, in the* returne *of which he hath been* creditor *long agoe.*

I have endeavoured therefore in this ſmall Treatiſe to convince beleevers of the grand importance of this duty, which is ſo full of gaine : to diſcover likewiſe the cauſes of the neglect herein, and remove the temptations and diſcouragements which doe occaſion it, and have briefly reſolved ſuch caſes as doe more uſually occur in the practiſe of it. But principally, my deſire was to give in ſome few experiments, and obſervations which may helpe to teach the weaker ſort, though not perfectly to reade, yet here and there to ſpell, (and eſpecially out of the impreſſions in their own hearts) Gods meaning towards them in his anſwers. I have caſt in ſome ſcattered calculations of broken prayers caſt up, which though they will not amount to make generall and perfect Tables out of, yet may ſerve, as inſtances and examples, for young beginners, to direct them in the exerciſe of this moſt uſefull skill, and wiſdome, how to compute and ballance their accounts by comparing their prayers *and their* returnes *together.*

This ſmall and imperfect embryon, I have preſumed to ſend forth into the world; and directed it firſt of all to preſent its ſervice unto you; *and make an honourable & thankfull mention of* your Name. Your *worth deſerves a more coſtly, large, & laſting monument for this inſcription.* Your *own abilities of learnings eloquence,*

and

and depth of wiſdome in humane affaires, would you *bee perſwaded to lay them out, as* you *are able, would erect ſuch a remembrance and ſumptuous memoriall of* you, *when* you *are gathered to* your *Fathers, as would beare ſome proportion to* your *great worth. But that which emboldned me was the neere affinity which meditations of this nature doe hold, with thoſe other* your *more retired thoughts* you *think to none but* God *and your own ſoule.* You *have been long a frequent and conſtant dealer in this bleſſed way of entercourſe with God in private: Thoſe that know* you, *know* your *ſtrict obſervance of thoſe exchange hours* you *have devoted to meet with* God, *and enjoy communion with* Him. *But above all, it was that perſonall obligation, under which a great and ſpeciall favour from* you *long ſince brought me, upon which I devoted (with my ſelfe) the firſt of my labours unto* your *ſervice. And it became one great reliefe unto my thoughts, weighing the many inconveniences of appearing thus in publique, that it gave ſo full occaſion to pay my vowes thus openly before all the world; which having now done, God* that is rich in mercy to all that call upon him, *fill you with all Grace, and grant all your petitions; ſo prayes,*

Your Worſhips

Obliged to love

and ſerve *you*

THO: GOODVVIN.

The Table.

Chap. 1. The maine obſervation: That Gods people are diligently to obſerve the anſwers of their prayers. *pag.* 2
The ſinfulneſſe of the neglect hereof demonſtrated by ſeven reaſons. p. 3
1. Reaſ. *An ordinance of God taken in vaine.* ibid.
2. Reaſ. *Gods attributes taken in vaine.* 4
3. Reaſ. *God in anſwering made to ſpeak in vaine.* 5
4. Reaſ. *God provoked not to anſwer.* 6
5. Reaſ. *We ſhall not returne thanks.* ibid.
6. Reaſ. *We ſhall loſe much experience.* ibid.
1. *Of Gods faithfulneſſe.* 7
2. *Of our own wayes towards him.* ibid.
7. Reaſ. *We ſhall loſe much comfort.* 8

Chap. 2. Three Caſes: The firſt concerning prayers for ſuch promiſes as may be accompliſht in ages to come. 9
1 § *Such prayers the Church to come doth reap.* ibid.
2 § *Yet we at preſent may have anſwer about them.* 11
3 § *In Heaven, and at the laſt day, we ſhall rejoyce for their accompliſhment.* ibid.

Chap. 3. Second Caſe: Concerning prayers made for others of our friends, &c. How anſwered. 12
1 § *Such prayers oft granted.* ibid.
2 § *Yet not alwaies in the thing prayed for.* 13
Such promiſes but indefinite, ibid.
As all temporall promiſes are. 14
Our faith towards them not required to be aſſurance. 15
Unleſſe God give a ſpeciall faith. ibid.

3 § *Such*

3 § *Such prayers returned into our owne bosomes.* 16
4 § *God in the end casts some out of our prayers.* 17
5 § *Those prayers answered in some others.* 18

Chap. 4. Third case: How the influence of our owne prayers, when others pray also for the same thing with us may be discerned. 19
1 § *If our hearts are affected With the same holy affection.* ibid.
Unbeknowne each to other. 20
2 § *By some speciall endeavour: as,*
1 *Some notable circumstance.* ibid.
2 *By joy in the accomplishment.* 21
3 *By thankfulnesse for the accomplishment.* ibid.
This lesse to be doubted when the thing prayed for by us doth concerne our owne particular. 22

Chap. 5. Common directions helpfull in all cases, and prayers: taken first from observations from *Before* and *In* praying. 22
1 § BEFORE: *When God prepares the heart.* ibid.
Difference betweene Satans motions to prayer, and Gods. 23
2 § *In prayer: Gods* speakings *in prayer are evidences of hearing: and discerned by four things.* 24
1 *Giving a quietnesse by prayer about the thing prayed for.* ibid.
3 § 2 *By revealing his love, in and upon such petitions.* 26
A caution herein. ibid.
Reasons why God drawes nigh when he grants not the thing. 27
4 § 3 *God sometimes gives a particular assurance.* 28
A caution herein. 29
5 § 4 *By giving a restlesse importunity to pray for a particular mercy.* 30

Chap. 6. Observations made upon the dispositions of the heart *after* prayer: Untill the ISSUE of the thing prayed for. 31
1 § 1 *When God gives an obedient dependant heart.* ibid.
2 § *When God gives an heart* waiting *for and expecting it.* 32

Chap, 7. Observations made AFTER prayer *upon* the ISSUE: first *If accomplisht*: whether as the fruit of prayer, or of common providence. 32

1 § *God sometimes answers the prayer in the very thing and manner desired.* ibid.

2 § *Directions to discerne that things thus obtained are in answer to prayers.* 34

1 *From* the manner of Gods performance. *A more then ordinary hand discovered in things accomplisht by prayer, instanced in five particulars.* ibid.

1 *By bringing it to passe through difficulties.* 35

2 *By facilitating all meanes.* ibid.

3 *Effecting it suddenly.* 36

4 *With addition of other mercies above what was desired.* ibid.

5 *By some speciall circumstance as a token of his hand in it.* ibid.

3 § *From the* Time, *wherein it is accomplisht.* 37

As first when we were most instant in prayer. 38

2. *In the fittest time for us. Then,* ibid.

1 *When we have most need.* 39

2 *When the heart was best prepared to receive it.* ibid.

4 § 3 *From the proportion which may be observed betwixt Gods dealings in the accomplishment, and our prayers.* 40

Chap 8. *Seven observations* more, from the *Effects*, which the accomplishment of the mercy hath upon the heart. 42

1 § *If it drawes the heart nearer to God.* ibid.

2 § *Enlargeth the heart with thankfulnesse.* 43

3 § *And encourageth the heart the more to pray, for other things.* ibid.

4 § *If it makes more carefull to performe the vowes made to obtaine it.* ibid.

5 § *If by faith a man sees and acknowledgeth Gods sole hand in the accomplishment.* 44

6 § *By an assurance which comes sometimes with the mercy.* 45

§ 7 *By*

7 § By the event: *Things obtained by prayer, prove ſtable mercies.* 46

Chap. 9. Conſiderations, to quiet us, and to help to diſcerne an acceptation of the prayer, when the thing is *Not accompliſht.* 47

1 § *The thing not alwayes granted, when yet the prayer is heard.* ibid.

An Objection anſwered. ibid.

2 § *Some bleſſings not abſolutely promiſed, nor abſolutely to be prayed for.* 48

In which a deniall is to be interpreted as beſt for us in Gods judgement. ibid.

3 § *There may be a reſervation in the deniall for ſome greater mercy.* ibid.

4 § *There may be a tranſmutation into ſome other bleſſing of the ſame kind.* 49

5 § *God when he denies, yet anſwereth to the ground of our prayers.* 50

6 § *And yeilds far in it, to give ſatisfaction to his childe.* 51

7 § *We may know that the prayer notwithſtanding is accepted, by the effects upon the heart, which are foure.* 52

1 *If we acknowledge God righteous in the deniall.* ibid.

2 *If God fills the heart with contentment in the deny-all.* 53

3 *If the heart be thankfull out of faith.* ibid.

4 *If not diſcouraged, but prayes ſtill.* ibid.

Chap. 10. *Application:* A reproofe of them that pray, but looke not after the *Returnes* of their prayers: The cauſes of this neglect, are 54

1. *Temptations:* 1 *From want of aſſurance that our perſons are accepted.* 55

2. *From the weakneſſe of our prayers: three anſwers to it.* 56

3 *From*

3 *From not obtaining what we formerly prayed for, answered by four things.* 58
2 *More sinfull discouragements, as* 59
1 *From slothfulnesle in praying.* ibid.
2 *Looking at prayer as a duty onely, and not as a meanes to obtaine.* 60
3 *Falling into sinne after prayers.* 61
Six Observations more out of the Text.
1. Obser. *That God doth sometimes not speake peace to his own people.* 64
2. Obser. *The cause thereof some folly.* ibid.
3. Obser. *God onely can speake peace.* 66
4. Obser. *God easily can give peace.* 68
5. Obser. *God will certainly speake to his people.* 69
6. Obser. *After peace spoken his people should returne no more to folly.* 70
The sin and folly of relapsing shewn by seven reasons. 74
Temptations from relapse into the same sinne after peace spoken, answered
By Scriptures. 83
By three Examples. 84
By foure Reasons. 87
Five Cautions. 91

THE

THE RETURNE OF PRAYERS.

PSAL. 85. 8.

I will heare what God the Lord will ſpeake : for He will ſpeak peace unto his people, and to his Saints : but let them not turne againe to folly.

The Coherence of the Words.

THis PSALME was penned, in the name and for the comfort of the whole Church of the Jews, both as a Prophecy of, and a Prayer for their returne out of the Babyloniſh Captivity, and the flowing in againe ofthat ancient glory, peace, adminiſtration of Juſtice, liberty of Gods Ordinances, plenty and increaſe, which formerly they enjoyed, but had now ſuffered an ebbe of ſeventy years continuance. And firſt he beginneth with Prayer, from the firſt *Verſe* to this we have in hand, putting the Lord in minde of, and urging Him

with His gracious dealings in former times unto His Church: this is not the first time (saith he) that the Church hath beene in Captivity, and that thou hast returned it, (as out of *Egypt*, &c.) and therefore we hope that thou wilt doe so againe; *Thou hast been favourable unto thy Land*, &c. His prayer being finished, and he having spoke, he now stands, and listens, as you use to doe when you expect an Eccho, what Eccho he should have, what answer would be returned from Heaven, whither his prayer had already come, *I will heare what the Lord will speake*: or as some read it, *I heare what the Lord doth speak*: for sometimes there is a present Eccho, a speedy answer returned to a mans heart, even ere the Prayer is half finished, as unto *Daniel Dan.9.20*, 21. And in briefe it is this, *The Lord will speake peace unto His people*: this answer he finds written at the bottome of the Petition, but with this clause of admonition for time to come, added, *But let them not returne againe to folly*: a good use to be made of so gracious an answer.

CHAP. I.

The maine observation and subject of this Discourse thence deduced: That Gods people are diligently to observe the answers to their Prayers: *The reasons of it.*

THese words being especially spoken in relation to the answer of God returned to his Prayer made, therefore in that relation I mean principally to handle them.

The observation is this; *That when a man hath put up Prayers to God*, he is to rest *assured, that God will in mercy answer his Prayers*, and *to listen diligently, and observe how his Prayers are answered*: both are here to be observed. *I will heare what God will speake*, that is, how he will accomplish them; and withall he confidently expresseth an assurance, that *God will speake peace*. Thus doth the Church *Mic.7.7,8. I will looke to the Lord, I will waite, my God will heare me*: She was both sure of gracious audience with him, *my God will heare me*: and she will waite till he answers her, and observe how he doth it, *I will looke to the Lord*: and verse 9. *I will beare the indignation of the Lord, till he plead*

plead my cause. So *Habakkuk*, he having made a Prayer against the Tyranny of *Nebuchadnezzar*, in the first Chapter, having ended it, he begins the second Chapter thus, *I will stand upon my Watch tower, and see what he will answer me:* and in the end an answer comes *verse* 2. And as he thus waited for a Vision (for sometime their Prophecies were in answer to their prayers) so should we for an answer unto ours.

The sinfulnesse of the neglect hereof demonstrated by seven reasons.

Reason 1.

Hereby an Ordinance of God is taken invaine: which is Gods Name.

1. Reason, because otherwise you take an Ordinance of God in vaine in your hearts, which is to take *Gods Name* (with whom in that Ordinance you deal) *in vaine:* for it is a signe you thinke your Prayer not an effectuall meanes to attaine that end it is ordained for; and say secretly in your hearts, as they *Job* 21. 15. *What profit have we, if we pray to him?* for if we use any means, and expect not the end, it is a signe we think the meanes vaine to accomplish that end. Whereas every faithfull Prayer is ordained of God to be a meanes to obtaine what we desire and pray for, and is not put up in vaine, but shall have answer: 1 *Iohn* 5.14,15. *This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we aske any thing according to His Will, He heareth us:* tis true, God heareth an enemy, but to *heare with favour*, is the *hearing* there meant; and is so used in our ordinary speech, as we say of a Favourite, that he hath the Kings eare; and if a man be *obstinate* to a mans *counsell*, we say, *he would not heare*, though he give the hearing; so here, *to heare* is a word of gracious inclination to doe the things required; and thus *Gods eares* are said to be *open to their Prayers*; and so it followes there, that *if he heareth us, whatsoever we aske, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.* Assoone as we have prayed, we are said *to have our petitions*, that is, they are then granted, and we may be confident they are assented unto by God; although in regard of outward dispensation, the command for accomplishment is not yet come forth: even as a petitioner is said to *have his suite*, when the *word of the King is gone forth* that it shall be done; though it passeth not the Seale, or be not signed a good while after. And like as when a wicked man sinneth, assoone as the act is committed, so soone *doth sentence* from God goe forth against the sinner, but the *Execution* overtakes him not (it may be) a good while after, according to that of *Solomon, Sentence against* Eccles. 8. 11.

an evill doer is not presently executed, it is *presently sentenced*, as the words imply, but not *executed*: so in like manner falleth it out, when a godly man prayes, that as soone as the prayer arrives in Heaven (which is in an instant) so soon is the petition granted. (So *Dan. 9. at the beginning* of his prayer the *Commaund came forth, ver. 23.* though the *Angel*, who brought the answer, arrived not at him till towards the end in the Evening, *ver. 21.*) but the reall accomplishment of it may be deferred. So as no prayer in respect of an answer to it is in vaine; but where God hath given a heart to speak, He hath an care to heare, and love to return an answer; which not to regard, is to take an Ordinance in vaine, which is *Gods* Name.

Reason 2.
We take the Attributes of God in vaine.

And secondly, not simply *Gods Name*, as in an Ordinance made known, but also His Name, that is, His Attributes are taken in vain. For it is a signe you think of that God you pray to, that either *his eare is heavy, that he cannot heare: or his hand shortned, that he cannot save: or his heart straitned, and his bowells restrained, that he will not*: And thus you rob him, and despoile him of one of his most Royall Titles, whereby he stiles himself, a *God that heareth prayers*; who is so regardfull of them, that in the first of *Kings* 8.59. they are said to be *nigh the Lord day and night*, they are all before him, and he sets them in his view, as we doe letters of friends which we stick in our windows, that wee may remember to answer them, or lay them not out of our bosomes, that we might be sure not to forget them: so the petitions of his people, passe not out of his sight, till he sends an *answer*, which is called *speaking* here; God *speaking* as well in his *works* as in his word. But you, by your neglect herein, make an Idoll God of him, such as were the *vanities of the Heathen*, as if he had *eares and heard not, eyes and saw not* your need &c. Such a God as *Elias* mockt, *You must speake aloud* (saith he) *he may be in a journey, &c.* Even such a *God* doe you make the *God of Heaven and earth* to be, whilest you put no more confidence in him, or make no more reckoning of your *prayers* to him, then the *heathens* did of their *sacrifises* to their *gods*. Petitioners doe not only put up their request, but use to wait at great mens doors, and enquire, and listen what answer is given unto them; and it is part of an *honour* to grant men that we do so; and for the same

Psal. 65.2.

same end are we also to *wait on God*, as an acknowledgement of his *greatnesse*, and our *distance* from him, and *dependance* upon him; as *the eyes of the servants looke to the hand of their Masters*; *so do we* (saith *David*) *on thee, till thou hast mercy on us.* And *Psal.* 130. after he had prayed, *ver.* 2. he saith, he *waited more then they that watch for the morning*, like those that having some great businesse to doe on the morrow, long for the day light, and look often out to spy the day, so he for a glimmering, and dawning of an answer. The like we have *Psal.* 5. 3. *In the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and look*, that is, for an answer. Psal. 123. 2.

Againe, 3. If God doth give you an answer, if you minde it not, you let God speake to you in vaine, when you doe not listen to what he answers: If two men walke together, and the one, when himselfe hath said, and spoke what he would, listens not, but is regardlesse of what the other answers, he exceedingly slights the man: As *non respondere pro convitio est*, not to answer againe is contempt; so *non attendere*, not to attend to what one sayes: Now our *speaking* to God *by prayers*, and his *speaking* to us by *answers* thereunto, and to study his dealings with us, by comparing our prayers and his answers together, which are as *Dialogues* between us and him, is one great part of our *walking with God.* It is said of *Samuels* Prophecy, *that not a Word of it fell to the gound*: and so it may be said of our prayers; and so it ought to be of *Gods answers, not a Word of them should fall to the ground*: as there doth, if you by your observation, and listning thereunto catch them not, (as *Benhadads* servants are said to doe *Ahabs* words) apprehend, and observe them not: and by the same reason that you are to observe the fulfilling of Gods promises, you are of your prayers also: now, 1 *Kings* 8. 56. it is said, *not one word failed of all he promised. Solomon* had observed this by a particular survay, and regist̃er made of all that *God* had spoken and done for them, and found not a promise unperformed: and there is the like reason both of answers to prayers, (for *prayers are but putting promises into suite*;) and for our observing of them: and therefore *Solomon* brings those words in there, to this very purpose, to confirme their faith in this, that no prayers made, would faile, being grounded on a promise, thereby to encourage others, and his own heart to *Reason* 3. *If God give an answer, we make him speake in vaine.* 1 Sam. 3. 19.

diligence herein, as alſo as a motive unto God to heare him; for *ver.*59. he inferrs upon it, *let my words be nigh thee*, &c. Seeing thou alwayes thus performeſt thy good word unto thy people.

Reaſon 4. *God may be provoked, not to anſwer at all.*

4. Yea, you will provoke the *Lord* not to anſwer at all, he will forbeare to anſwer, becauſe hee ſees it will be thus in vaine. When a man is talking to one that liſtens not to him, he will ceaſe to anſwer, and leave off ſpeaking, and ſo will God. So as that which the *Apoſtle* ſaith of *faith*, that it is *not enough to beleeve, but when you have done the will of God, you have need of patience* to eeke out faith, that *you may inherit the promiſes*, may be alſo ſaid, and is alike true of praying: it is not enough to pray, but after you have prayed, you have need to liſten for an anſwer, that you may receive your prayers; God will not fulfill them elſe. As he ſaid, *The Sermon was not done*, when yet the Preacher had done, becauſe it is not done till practiſed: ſo our prayers are not done, when yet made, but you muſt further waite for, and attend the accompliſhment.

Heb. 10. 36.

Reaſon 5. *We ſhall not returne thanks to God for hearing us.*

5. If you obſerve not his anſwers, how ſhall you bleſſe God, and returne thanks to him for hearing your prayers? *Pſal.* 116. 1, 2. *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voyce, and my ſupplication*, and therefore he goes on to thanke him, throughout the whole Pſalme. You *are to watch unto prayer with thankſgiving*: and therefore, as to watch, to obſerve, and recollect your own wants, which you are to pray for, that you may have matter of requeſts to put up, ſo alſo to obſerve Gods anſwers for matter of thankſgiving; and many fill that common-place-head full of matter, to furniſh them for petitioning, but as for this other of thankſgiving, they watch not unto it againſt they come to pray, nor ſtudy matter for that head alſo; and if any ſtudy will furniſh you this way, it is the ſtudying out of Gods anſwers to your prayers: The reaſon you pray ſo much, and give thanks ſo little, is, that you minde not Gods anſwers: you doe not ſtudy them. When we have put up a faithfull prayer, God is made our Debtor by promiſe, and we are to take notice of his payment, and give him an acknowledgement of the receipt of it, he loſeth of his glory elſe.

Col. 4. 2.

Reaſon 6. *We loſe much experience.*

6. As God loſeth, ſo your ſelves alſo the experience which you

you might get hereby. 1. Both experience of God and his faithfulneſſe, which will cauſe in you, hope and confidence in God another time, when you have found him againe and againe anſwering your prayers. It was a ſpeech of one eminent in holineſſe, upon occaſion of the accompliſhment of a great requeſt made to God by him, That God having never denied him any requeſt; *I have tried God often, now* (ſayes he) *henceforth I will truſt him*; if the hearing the prayers of another, will encourage us to go to God, (as *Pſal.*33.5 .*For this cauſe ſhall every one that is godly pray unto thee*) much more when wee obſerve, and have experience that our owne are heard: Therefore (ſayes *David*,) *Pſal.*116. 1, 2. *The Lord hath heard me, and I will call upon him as long as I live*: as if he had ſaid, Now that God hath heard me, now I know what to doe: this experiment, if I had no more, is enough to encourage me for ever to pray unto God: I have learned by it to call upon him, as long as I live. And alſo 2. by obſerving Gods anſwers to your prayers, you will gaine much inſight into your own hearts, and wayes, and prayers; and may thereby learne how to judge of them. So *Pſal.* 66.18,19. *Davids* aſſurance that he did not regard iniquity in his heart, was ſtrengthned by Gods having heard his prayers; for thus he reaſons, *If I regard iniquity in my heart*, God *will not heare me: But* God *hath heard me.* For 1. if God doth not grant your petitions, it will put you to ſtudy a reaſon of that his dealing: and ſo you will come to ſearch into your prayers, and the carriage of your hearts therefore, to ſee whether you *did not pray amiſſe*; according to that, *Yee luſt, and have not, becauſe yee aske amiſſe*, *Iames* 4.3. As if you ſend to a friend, who is punctuall in that point of friendſhip of returning anſwers, and uſeth not to faile, and you receive no anſwer from him, you will begin to thinke there is ſomething in it: and ſo alſo here, When a Petition is denied, you will be jealous of your ſelves, and inquiſitive, What ſhould be the matter, and ſo by that ſearch come to ſee *that* in your prayers, which you will learne to mend the next time. Or 2. if they be anſwered, yet becauſe that therein uſually God deales in a proportion with you to your prayers, (as you might perceive if you would obſerve his dealings with you) you would by this meanes come to have much inſight into Gods acceptation,

1. *Of Gods faithfulneſſe to us.*

2. *Of our own hearts and wayes toward him.*

tion, and opinion of your wayes: For you ſhould ſee his dealings with you, and yours with Him, to be exceeding parallel and correſpondent, and hold proportion each with other. So *Pſal.* 18.6. *In my diſtreſſe I called upon the Lord*, and ſo *verſ.* 7. 8. &c. he goes on to deſcribe his deliverance which was the fruit of thoſe prayers, and then at 20.21. verſes, &c. he addes his obſervation upon both, *According to the cleanneſſe of my hands hath he dealt with mee, &c. For with the pure thou ſhalt ſhew thy ſelfe pure.*

Reaſon 7. We ſhall loſe much comfort.

7. You will loſe much of your comfort: there is no greater joy then to ſee prayers anſwered, or to ſee ſoules converted by us, *Iohn* 16. 24. *Aske and you ſhall receive that your joy may be full*: the receiving anſwers makes joy to abound and overflow. Yea, even when we pray for others, if our prayers be anſwered for them, our joyes are exceeding great; much more when in our own behalfe: and therein, even in the ſmalleſt things which a Chriſtian doth enjoy, doth his comfort exceed anothers, that he hath them by vertue of prayers, and promiſes: he knowes how he came by them; *If ſtolen Waters be ſweet, and bread eaten in ſecret*, &c. (as *Solomon* ſayes) to wicked men; *beg'd meate is much more ſweete* to godly men: yea, in the very praying for outward mercies, there is more ſweetneſſe, then they have in enjoying them. As it is joy to a good heart to ſee any one converted, but much more to him that is the meanes of it; *I have no greater joy* (ſayes S. *Iohn*) *then that my children walke in truth*: So to ſee God doe good to his Church, and heare others prayers, is a comfort, but much more to ſee him doe it at a mans owne prayers. Therefore when God reſtores, comfort to a drooping ſoule, he is ſaid, *Eſay* 57. *To reſtore comfort alſo to his mourners*, that is, to thoſe that prayed and mourned for him, as well as unto that ſoule it ſelfe, it being a comfort to them to ſee their prayers anſwered. Comfort it is many wayes: 1. To heare from God; as to heare from a friend, though it be but two or three words, and that about a ſmall matter, if there be at the bottome this ſubſcription, *Your loving father*, or, *Your aſſured friend*, it ſatisfies abundantly: ſo alſo, 2. To know that God is mindefull of us, accepts our works, fulfills his promiſes: 3. How doth it rejoyce one to finde another of his minde in a controverſie?

Prov. 9. 17.

verſie? but that God and we ſhould be of *one minde*, and concurre in the deſire of the ſame things; *not two in the earth onely agree*, but God who is in heaven and we to agree, this rejoyceth the heart exceedingly. And thus it is when a man perceives his prayer anſwered. Therefore you loſe much of your comfort in bleſſings, when you doe not obſerve anſwers to your prayers.

CHAP. II.

Three caſes propounded: The firſt concerning prayers for the Church, and for the accompliſhment of ſuch promiſes as may fall out in ages to come.

NOw as for rules, and helps to find out *Gods* meaning towards you in your prayers, and to ſpie out anſwers; and how to know when God doth any thing in anſwer to your prayers, this is the next thing to be handled: wherein, firſt, I will anſwer ſome caſes and queries which may fall out in ſeverall ſorts of prayers, about the anſwering of them:

1. As firſt, concerning prayers put up for the Church, for the accompliſhment of ſuch things as fall out in all ages to come.

2. Concerning prayers made for others of your friends, kindred, &c.

3. Concerning thoſe prayers, whether for your ſelves or others, wherein others joyne with you.

§. 1. The full anſwer to ſuch prayers is to come.

For the firſt. Firſt, there may be ſome prayers, which you muſt be content, never your ſelves to ſee anſwered in this world, the accompliſhment of them not falling out in your time: ſuch as are thoſe you haply make for the calling of the Jewes, the utter downfall of Gods enemies, the flouriſhing of the Goſpel, the full purity and liberty of Gods Ordinances, the particular flouriſhing and good of the ſociety and place you live in: all you whoſe hearts are right, doe treaſure up many ſuch prayers as theſe, and *ſow* much of ſuch precious *ſeed*, which you muſt be content to have the Church (it may be) in after Ages to reap: All which prayers are not yet loſt, but will have anſwers: for as

God is an *eternall God*, and *Chriſts righteouſneſſe an everlaſting righteouſneſſe*, and therefore of *eternall* efficacy, *Dan.* 9. 24. *Being offered up by the eternall Spirit*, *Heb.* 9. 14. So are prayers alſo, which are the work of the eternall Spirit of Chriſt, made to that God in his Name, and in him are eternally accepted, and of eternall force, and therefore may take place in after Ages. So the prayer that Saint *Stephen* made for his perſecutors, tooke place in *Saul* when Saint *Stephen* was dead. So *Davids* prayer againſt *Judas*, *Pſal.* 109. 8, 9. tooke effect above a thouſand years after, as appears, *Acts* 1. 20. So the prayers of the Church for three hundred years in the Primitive times, that *Kings* might *come to the knowledge of the truth*, and *they lead peaceable and quiet lives in all Godlineſſe and honeſty*, (which Saint *Paul* in *Nero's* time exhorted unto, 1 *Tim.* 2. 2.) were not anſwered, and accompliſhed till *Conſtantines* time, when the Church brought forth a Man childe. So *Eſay* 58. after he had exhorted to, and given directions for faſting and prayer in a right manner, he adjoyneth this promiſe: Thou ſhalt *raiſe up the foundation of many generations*; *thou ſhalt be called the repairer of the breach*, namely for this, becauſe his faſting, and prayers might have influence into many ages yet to come, in the accompliſhment of what was prayed for. And that which Chriſt ſayes of the Apoſtles, reaping the fruit of Saint *John* the Baptiſts miniſtery, and the ſeed he had ſowne, is in like manner herein verified; *John* 4. 37. *One ſoweth and another reapeth*. And in this ſenſe that which the Papiſts ſay is true, that there is a common treaſury of the Church, not of their *merits*, but of their *prayers*: there are *bottles of teares* a filling, *Vialls* a filling to be poured out for the deſtruction of *Gods* enemies: what a collection of prayers hath there beene theſe many ages towards it? and that may be one reaſon why God will doe ſuch great things towards the end of the world, even becauſe there hath been ſo great a ſtock of prayers going, for ſo many ages, which is now to be returned: and herein it falls out to us in our *prayers* as in their *prophecies* to the *Prophets* of old, *The Spirit in them did ſignifie the ſufferings of* Chriſt, *and the glory that ſhould follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter the things that are now revealed*: and thus is it in the *ſpirit of prayer*, which is in ſtead of the *ſpirit*

Revel. 12. 11.

1 Pet. 1. 11.

of

of prophecy: for we pray through the guidance of the *Spirit* (*who teacheth us what to aske*) for many things that come to passe in after Ages.

§. 2. Yet they may have an answer at present, in assurance both that they shall come to passe, and of the acceptation of our persons for them.

Onely at present, it may be, in prayer thou hast revealed unto thee by a secret impression made on thy spirit, that these things shall come to passe, and so hast thy faith confirmed in them, and withall an evidence, that even for thy prayers, among others, God will performe them; and that the contribution of thy prayers, doth help to make up the summe: and upon such prayers God usually for the present also testifies the acceptation of a mans person. and reveales himselfe most to him that he is his; as he did to *Moses*; he never revealed his love to *Moses* more, then when he prayed most for Gods people. And haply thou hast that as one of thy best evidences of the uprightnesse of thy heart, that thou canst pray for the Churches good, though for a long time to come, which thou mayest never behold with thine eyes, even as *David* also did, and rejoyced in it.

§. 3. And in heaven we shall rejoyce at the accomplishment of them: and at the day of judgment.

And when they are accomplished, and thou in heaven, thy joy will surely be the more full for these thy prayers; as at the conversion of those thou hast prayed for, so at the ruine of the Churches enemies, &c. whom thou didst pray against; For if there be *joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner*, (as at the birth of a new Prince and Heire of heaven) then haply in a proportion he shall rejoyce most whose prayers had most hand in it, and a speciall interest therein. And so as thy other *works*, so thy prayers *follow thee*, and *the fruit of them*, as *Jeremy* speakes: and however yet at the day of Judgement thou shalt rejoyce, as well as they that enjoyed the fruit of thy prayers in their times, thou having sown the seed of their happinesse; *both he that sowes, and he that reaps shall then rejoyce together*, as Christ sayes, *Joh.* 4. 56. Jer. 17. 10.

CHAP. III.

The second case concerning prayers made for others: of our friends, &c. How they are answered.

THe second case is, concerning answers to our prayers for others, for particular men, as friends, and kindred, &c. and likewise for temporall blessings.

Pray for others you know we must: so the Elders of the Church for those that are sick, *James* 5. 15, 16. *Pray one for another*, saies Saint *James*: as in case a man is troubled with a lust, tell some private friend of it, *Confesse your sinnes one to another*; that when a mans owne prayers are not strong enough to cast it out, it may be done by the help of anothers prayers joyned with his. (So it follows, *That ye may be healed*, ver. 16. For in that sense I understand healing in ver. 16.) So also, 1 *John* 5. 16. *If a man see his brother sin a sinne, which is not unto death*, that is not against the *Holy Ghost, he shall aske life for him, and God shall give him life, that sinnes not unto death.*

Concerning this case I give these considerations, how such prayers are answered.

§. 1. Such prayers for others God often granteth.

1. Consideration. Such prayers God often heareth, why else are any such promises made? as *That they shall be healed in their bodies*, Jam. 5. 15. *healed of their lusts, ver.* 16. *converted to life*, 1 John 5. 16. God hath made these to encourage us to pray, and to testifie his abundant love to us; that it so overflowes and runs over, that he will hear us, not onely for our selves, but for others also: which is a signe we are in extraordinary favour. So God intimates concerning *Abraham*, to *Abimelech*, Gen. 20. 7. *He is a Prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live*: and as *he* was a *Prophet*, so *We are Priests*; as for our selves, so for others also, to *GOD our Father*: and it is a prerogative we have through the fellowship we have, and communion of CHRISTS *Priestly office, who hath made us Kings and Priests*, to prevaile and intercede for others; and a speciall token and pledge of extraordinary love. For if God hears a mans prayers for others, much more for himselfe in his owne behalfe. So when Christ healed the man sick of the palsie, it was, as it is said, *For the faith of the standers*

Revel. 1. 6.

by,

by, Mat. 9. 2. *He seeing their faith, said, Thy sinnes are forgiven thee*; the meaning is, not as if for their faith sake he forgave that man his sins, for, *The just doth live by his* (owne) *faith*: but to encourage them, who out of faith brought that sick man to him; and us all in like manner to bring others, and their plaints, by prayer, before him; he therefore then tooke occasion to declare and pronounce forgivenesse to that poore man; he therefore then said, *Thy sinnes are forgiven thee.* H. b. 2. 4.

2. Consideration: yet secondly, prayers for others may often also not obtaine the particular thing prayed for them. So *Samuels* prayer for *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 35. So *David* for his enemies, *Psal.* 37. 13. §. 2. Yet always they doe not prevaile for the parties prayed for.

For it is in this, as it is in the use of other meanes and Ordinances for the good of others; God making such like kinde of promises to our prayers herein as he hath made to our indeavours to convert when we preach to men: that looke as we preach to many, and yet but few beleeve, for, *Who hath beleeved our report?* as many as are *ordained to eternall life*; we *become all to all, and winne but some*: So we pray for many, not knowing who are ordained to eternall life, which whilest we know not, we are yet to pray for them, 1 *Tim.* 2. 3, 4. Onely as where God hath set his Ordinance of Preaching, it is more then a probable signe he hath some to convert, and usually the word takes among some, though often but a few: so when he hath stirred up our hearts to pray for others, it is a signe God will heare us for some of those we pray for: yet so as we may be denied. For God doth require it as a duty on our parts, because it is an outward meanes ordained by God, by which sometimes He useth to bring things to passe, but yet not as such a certaine, and infallible meanes, as he hath tied himselfe universally unto, to bring the thing to passe on his part.

And though indeed his promise to heare and accept the prayer is generall and universall: yet the promise to heare it, by granting the very thing it selfe prayed for, is but an indefinite promise; such as he makes to other meanes of doing men good, as to our admonitions and reproofes, and to our preaching, &c. *He makes such promises, because sometimes he doth heare*, and convert by them. For instance, that *promise* Jam. 5. 15. *of healing the sicke*, Such promses to hear us for others, being but indefinite, not universall.

cannot be universall: For it might then be supposed as a truth implyed in it, that sick men might never die, when as it is *appointed for all men once to die*, seeing it may be supposed that the Elders may at all such times of danger of death still come and pray with them: but the meaning is, that it is an ordinance, which God hath made a gracious promise unto, because *he often* doth restore the sick at their prayers: and therefore upon every such particular occasion, we are to relie upon God for the performance of it, by an act of recumbency, though with an act of full assurance that we shall obtaine it, we cannot; the promise not being universall, but indefinite.

Heb. 9 27.

Illustrated by the like tenour of all promises of things temporall.

Of the like nature are all other promises of things temporall, and outward, (of which we herein speak) as when God promiseth to *give long life* to them that *honour their parents*; *riches and honours to them that fear him*; the tenour and purport of which promises is not, as if absolutely, infallibly, and universally God doth alwayes perform these to those that are yet truly qualified with the conditions specified in those promises; The contrary both Scripture, instances, and common experience shewes: they are therefore indefinitely meant, and so to be understood by us; for, because when ever God doth dispense any such mercies to any of his, he would doe it by promise; *All his Wayes* to His *being truth*, that is, the fulfilling of some truth promised; and also God having purposed in his outward dispensation of things here in this world, to bestow riches and honours upon some that fear him, (though not upon all, for how then should *all things fall alike to all*? Poverty and contempt upon them that *fear God*, even as well as those that *fear Him not*.) He hath therefore indefinitely expressed his gracious dispensation herein: requiring answerably an act of faith (which principle in us is suited to a promise, as a faculty is to its proper object) suitable to that his meaning in the promise; That as he intended not in such promises an absolute, infallible, universall obligation of himself to the performance of them to all that fear him: so the act of faith which a man is to put forth toward this promise, in the application of it for his own particular, is not required to be an absolute, infallible perswasion, and assurance that God wil bestow these outward things upon him, having these qualifications in him; but onely an *indefinite*

Eccles. 7. 2.

The faith towards them required to be an indefinite act of recumbency, not of assurance.

finite act (as I may ſo call it) *of recumbency and ſubmiſſion*; caſting and adventuring our ſelves upon him for the performance of it to us, not knowing but he may in his outward diſpenſations make it good to us, yet with ſubmiſſion to His good pleaſure, if otherwiſe He diſpoſeth it.

It is true indeed, that that act of *generall aſſent*, which faith is to give to this promiſe in the generall abſtract truth of it, is to be an aſſured certain perſwaſion and belief, that God hath made this promiſe, and that He certainly will, and doth perform it unto ſome according to his purpoſe expreſſed therein; which act of generall aſſent, is that *beleeving without wavering*, namely of the truth of the promiſe in generall, which Saint *James* calls for in *prayer*, *James* 1. 6. But yet that ſpeciall act of *application* (as Divines call it) required in this faith, whereby I am to reſt upon it, for my own particular, is not required to be ſuch an undoubted perſwaſion, as to think that I ſhall certainly have this particular promiſe in kind fulfilled to me; for the truth, purpoſe, and intent of the promiſe, is not univerſall, but indefinite. So as it is but an *it may be* (as God elſewhere expreſſeth ſuch promiſes, as *Zeph.* 2. 1, 2.) that it ſhall be performed to me: and yet becauſe *it may be* God will performe it unto me, therefore my duty is to caſt my ſelf upon God; and put in for it, with ſubmiſſion to His good pleaſure for the performance of it to me. So that ſo far as the truth and intent of it, is revealed to be infallible and certain, ſo far a man is bound to have an anſwerable act of *faith*, of certain and infallible perſwaſion towards it, as to believe without wavering that God hath made ſuch a promiſe, and will perform it according to his intent in making it, which is *unto ſome*: but yet withall becauſe the tenour of it is but indefinite, & in that reſpect, whether it ſhall be performed to me or no, is not therein certainly revealed; Therefore God requires not of me in the application of ſuch a promiſe an abſolute full perſwaſion that he will perform it to me in ſuch or ſuch a manner, &c. But only an act of dependence and adherence with referring it to his wiſe and righteous good pleaſure towards me.

Though of aſſurance to the promiſe in generall, yet not in the application of it.

Yet when God ſometimes gives a ſpeciall faith, then we are to be aſſured the thing ſhall be done.

And yet again, if God ſhould at any time give a man ſuch a ſpeciall *Faith* concerning any ſuch particular temporall bleſſing for himſelf or another, then he is bound to believe it thus in particular

ticu'ar: as when He gave power to any to work miracles, (as to his Apoſtles He did, with a Commiſſion to work them) then they were bound to believe that ſuch and ſuch a miracle ſhould infallibly be wrought by them; as that the Devills ſhould be caſt out by them, &c. And therefore in this caſe Chriſt rebukes His Diſciples, for not believing thus upon ſuch particular occaſions, *Mat.*17.20. And then it is alſo true, that if God give ſuch a *Faith*, He will infallibly performe it: and thus thoſe his words are to be underſtood, *Mat.*27.22. *Whatſoever ye aske in faith believing, ye ſhall receive*, he ſpeaks it of the faith of *miracles*, for 21 *verſe* he had ſaid, *If ye believe and doubt not, ye ſhall ſay to this Mountain, remove into the ſea, and it ſhall be removed*: ſo that when God works ſuch a faith, and we are called to it, we are bound to beleeve with a certain perſwaſion that ſuch a thing will be done, and it ſhall be done; but unto ſuch a kind of ſpeciall faith in temporall promiſes for our ſelves or others, God doth not now alwayes call us. If indeed at any time we did believe, and doubted by reaſon of a ſpeciall faith wrought by God, that God would remove a Mountain into the Sea, or beſtow any outward mercy, it ſhould be done: for he that ſtirred up ſuch a *faith*, would accompliſh the thing: but it is not that, which God requires of beleevers, that they ſhould without doubting thus believe concerning outward things; the promiſes thereof being not univerſall, but indefinite; and therefore anſwerably a man is not abſolutely bound to beleeve that God will certainly beſtow ſuch a temporall bleſſing on him, no not though he ſhould have the qualification, which the promiſe is made unto, the promiſe being not univerſall, made to all ſo qualified, but indefinite to ſome of ſuch ſo qualified. The caſe is the ſame of beleeving promiſes made to our praying for others, which is the thing in hand.

An objection prevented.

§. 3. Such prayers for others are often returned into our own boſome.

3. When the prayers are thus made out of conſcience of our duty for ſuch, whom yet God doth not intend that mercy unto, then they are returned again into our own boſomes to our advantage: even as S. *Paul* ſaith, *That his rejoycing that others preached*, though they loſt their labour, ſhould *turn to his ſalvation*, *Phil.*1.20. So prayers for others, though to the parties themſelves were prayed for in vain, yet they turn to our good. So *Pſalm.* 35.12,13. *When his enemies were ſick*, David *he prayed and hum-*

* *bled*

bled himſelf, and *my prayers* (ſayes he) *turned into my boſome*. *David* did by this his prayer in ſecret for his enemies, teſtifie the ſincerity of his heart to God, and his true forgiveneſſe of them, (for it is the uſuall diſpoſition of Gods Children, to pray for them that are the greateſt enemies to them) and this prayer though it did not profit them, yet it turned to *Davids* own good, it came back, and home againe to him, with bleſſings to himſelfe; God delighting in, and rewarding ſuch a diſpoſition in his childe, as much as any other; becauſe therein we reſemble *Chriſt* ſo truly, and ſhew that God is our Father, and our ſelves to have his bowels in us; and God ſtirreth up this praying diſpoſition in his children for their enemies, not alwayes that he meanes to heare them for them, but becauſe he meanes to draw forth, and ſo have an occaſion to reward thoſe holy diſpoſitions, which are the nobleſt parts of his image in them, and wherewith he is ſo much delighted; and ſo their prayers returne into their owne boſomes, and it is taken, as if they had prayed for themſelves all that while. Thus in like manner, when *Moſes* prayed ſo earneſtly for the people of *Iſrael*, God offered to returne his prayer into his owne boſome, and doe as much for him alone, as he had deſired that God would doe for them. *I will make of thee a great Nation*, (ſayes God to him) for whom I will doe as much for thy ſake, as thou haſt prayed I ſhould doe for theſe. As in preaching the Goſpell, *Chriſt* told the Diſciples, That if in any houſe they came to preach peace, there were not a *Son of peace*, *Luke* 10. on whom the meſſage might take place, and their peace reſt, *Your peace* (ſayes he) *ſhall returne unto you againe*. So is it, if your prayers take not place.

The reaſon.

Exod. 32. 13.

§. 4.

4. If we have prayed long for thoſe, whom God intends not mercy unto, he will in the end caſt them out of our prayers and hearts, and take our hearts off from praying for them. That which he did by a revelation from heaven to ſome Prophets of old, as to *Samuel* and *Jeremiah*, the ſame he doth by a more undiſcerned worke; that is, by withdrawing aſſiſtance to pray for ſuch; by withdrawing the ſpirit of ſupplication from a man, for ſome men, and in ſome buſineſſes. Now thus he did with *Samuel*; *Why doſt thou mourne for Saul?* 1 *Sam.* 16. 1. So with *Jeremiah*, Jer. 7. 16. *Pray not for this people*: and this he doth, becauſe he

God often in the end caſts ſuch out of our prayers, as he intendes not to heare us for.

The reaſon.

is loath when his people doe pray but to heare them; and would not that such precious breath as that of prayer is, should be without its full and direct successe, or be in vaine: therefore when he meanes not to heare, he laies the key of prayer out of the way, so desirous is he to give answers to every prayer. It falls out in this case of praying for another, as in reproving another. One whom God intends not good unto, God will lock up a mans heart towards such a man, that he shall not be able to reprove him; when towards another, God doth inlarge it as much, where he intends good; thus it is sometimes in praying for another: so as in praying a man shall not be able to pray for, as not to reprove such a man, though his heart was to doe both: but it fareth with him as God threatneth concerning *Ezekiel* towards that people, that he makes his *tongue cleave to the roofe of his mouth.*

Ezek. 3. 26.

§. 5. God sometimes answers, whom we praied not for. The reason.

4. God will heare those prayers for, and answer them in some others, in whom we shall have as much comfort, as in these we prayed for: and so it often proves and falls out. God, to shew *he lookes not as man looks*, nor chooseth as he chooseth, lets our hearts be set on worke to pray for the conversion or good of one he intends not mercy to; and then answers them in some other, whom He makes as deare unto us. When God had cast off *Saul*, still *Samuels* heart lingred after him, and he mourned for him: but God at the same time, when he bids him cease mourning for *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 16. to shew that yet he accepted that his mourning as it came from him; *Goe*, (sayes he) *and anoint one of the Sons of Jesse*, 1 Sam. 16. 1. *Samuel* desired to see a good successor in that government, and he having beene their ruler, it was his speciall care; and he having annointed *Saul*, it exceedingly grieved him, that he should prove so wicked; and God saw and answered the ground of his desires; and therefore immediately upon his prayers, sent him to anoint the best King that ever was upon that Throne, who was the issue and Man-childe of those his prayers. And againe, when *Samuel* came to anoint one of the sonnes of *Jesse*; when he saw *Eliab*, *ver.* 6. *Surely* (saith he) *the Lords anointed is before me:* If *Samuel* had beene to choose, he would have chosen him, and would have prayed for and desired him: but *God seeth not as man seeth*, ver. 7. *and chooseth not as man chooseth:*

chooſeth: but in *David* was his prayer fully heard, and anſwered, and that better. So *Abraham* had prayed for *Iſhmael*; and *Oh let Iſhmael live in thy ſight! Gen.* 17. but God gave him *Iſaac* in ſtead of him. So perhaps thou prayeſt for one childe more then for another, out of thy naturall affection looking *on his countenance* and ſtature; as *Samuel* did on *Eliabs*: but yet thy prayers being ſincere in the gronnd of them, in that thou deſireſt a childe of promiſe, God therefore anſwers thee, though in another, for whom yet haply, thy heart was not ſo much ſtirred; who yet when he is converted, proves to thee as great a comfort; and it is as much as if that other thou didſt not pray for, had beene wrought upon.

CHAP. IV.

The third Caſe, about ſuch prayers wherein others joyne with us: How therein to diſcerne the influence of our owne prayers.

THe third Caſe to be conſidered is, when a man prayes for ſomething with others; or which others likewiſe pray for with him, ſo as he is not alone in it; how then ſhould he know, that his prayers have a hand in obtaining it, as well as theirs? For in ſuch caſes *Satan* is apt to object; though the thing is granted indeed; yet not for thy prayers, but for the prayers of thoſe others joyned in it with thee.

§. 1. If our hearts were affected in praying with the ſame holy affections wherewith others that praied with us were.

1. If thy heart did ſympathize, and accord in the ſame holy affections with thoſe others in praying, then it is certaine thy voice hath helpt to carry it; *If two agree on earth* (ſaith *Chriſt*) *Mat.* 18. 19. the word is συμφωνήσωσιν, that is, if they harmonially agree to play the ſame tune: for prayers are muſicke in Gods eares, and ſo called *Melody to God, Epheſ.* 5. 19. It is not ſimply their agreeing in the thing prayed for, but in the affections: for it is the affections that make the conſort and the melody: now if the ſame holy affections were toucht, and ſtruck by *Gods Spirit* in thy heart, that in theirs, then thou doeſt help to make up the conſort, and without thee it would have beene im-

perfect: yea, without thee the thing might not have been done; for *God* ſtands ſometimes upon ſuch a number of voices, and one voice caſts it, as when he named ten righteous perſons to ſave *Sodome*: when therefore the ſame holy motive and affections acted thee in thy prayer, which did them in theirs, it was the work of the ſame Spirit, both in them and thee, and God hath heard thee.

Eſpecially when this ſympathy unbeknown each to other.

Eſpecially if God did ſtir up the ſame ſecret inſtinct in thee, to ſympathize with another in praying for ſuch a thing unbeknown one to another, as ſometimes it falls out; then ſurely thy prayers are in it as well as his. You ſhall obſerve ſometimes a generall inſtinct of the Spirit, put into Gods peoples hearts, generally to pray for or againſt a thing, without each others ſtirring up one another: even as *Ezekiel* by the river *Chebar* prophecyed the ſame things *Jeremiah* did at home at *Jeruſalem*. Thus againſt the time that *Chriſt* the *Meſſia* came in the fleſh, there was a great expectation raiſed up in the hearts of the godly people, to looke and pray for him, *Luke* 2. 27. and 38.

§. 2.

By ſome ſpeciall evidence: as firſt, ſometimes by ſome notable circumſtance.

2. God doth uſually, and often evidence to a man, that his prayers contributed, and went among the reſt towards the obtaining of it; as,

1. By ſome circumſtance: as for example, ſometimes by ordering it ſo, that that man that prayed moſt for a thing of concernment, ſhould have the firſt news of it when it comes to be accompliſht: which God doth, as knowing it will be moſt welcome newes to him. God doth herein, as we doe with a friend, who we know is cordiall in, and wiſheth well to a buſineſſe; he ſends him the firſt word of it, who was moſt hearty in it, and prayed moſt about it. Good old *Simeon*, had ſurely been earneſt in ſeeking the Lord, as well as the reſt in *Jeruſalem*, to ſend the *Meſſiah* into the world, to reſtore and raiſe up the ruines of *Iſrael*, for *God* did reveale to him, that he ſhould ſee him before he died: and therefore to evidence to him his reſpect to his prayers, God carried the good old man into the Temple, juſt at the time when the Childe was brought into the Temple, for to *be preſented to the Lord*, *Luke* 2. 27, 28. And in like manner good *Anna who had ſerved God with faſting and prayer night and day*: God ordereth it ſo, that ſhe muſt alſo come in at the ſame inſtant,

inſtant, *Luke* 2. 38. By ſome ſuch like peculiar circumſtance or other, doth God often uſe, to witneſſe to a mans heart, that he hath heard him in buſineſſes, prayed for in common with others.

Secondly by the hearts being filled with much joy in the accompliſhment.

2. By filling the heart with much joy in the accompliſhment of what a man prayed for: which is an evident argument that his prayers did move the Lord to effect it, as well as the prayers of others. Thus that good old *Simeon*, ſeeing his prayers now anſwered, he was even willing to die through joy; and thought he could not die in a better time; *Lord now let thy ſervant depart in peace.* For when the deſires have vented and laid out much of themſelves, then when the returne comes home, they have an anſwerable part and ſhare in the comfort of it: and as deſires abounded in praying, ſo will joy and comfort alſo in the accompliſhment. As when a Ship comes home, not onely the chiefe owners, but every one that ventered ſhall have a ſhare out of the returne, in a proportion to the adventure: ſo here, though ſome one whom it mainly concerns hath eſpeciall intereſt in the mercy obtained, yet thou ſhalt have thy prayers out in joy from God, that the thing is granted. Saint *Paul* had planted a Church at *Theſſalonica*, but he could not ſtay to water it with his owne preaching, yet when abſent, he waters thoſe Plants which he had ſet, with prayers, night and day: 1 *Theſ.* 3. 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly for you*, ſayes he: and as his prayers were exceeding abundant for them, ſo was his joy as abundant in them, when he had heard that they ſtood ſtedfaſt, and fell not back againe; *Now we live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord*, ver. 8. *And what thanks can we render to God for all the joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes, before the Lord? ver.* 9.

3. By thankfulneſſe for it when accompliſht.

3. If God give you a heart thankfull for a bleſſing vouchſafed to another, prayed for by you with others, it is another ſigne your prayers have ſome hand in it. Saint *Paul* knew not *what thanks to give* for the anſwering of his prayers, as in that forementioned place. Old *Eli* had put up but one ſhort ejaculatory petition that we reade of, for *Hannah*, and that was, *The Lord grant thy petition*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 17. and for the returne of that one prayer, when *Hannah* related how *God* had anſwered her *ver.* 16. 27. he returned ſolemne thanks, *and he worſhipped the Lord there*, *ver.* 28.

§. 3. Especially when the thing obtained concernes a mans owne particular.

And lastly, in case the thing concerned thy selfe, which was prayed for by others helping thee therein, what cause hast thou but to think that it was granted for thy owne prayers, and not for theirs onely? seeing God stirred up their hearts to pray for thee, and gave thee a heart to pray for thy selfe, and besides gave thee the thing which thou desiredst: which argues thou art beloved aswell as they. *I know this shall turne to my salvation through your prayer*, saith Saint *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 19. though their prayers went to the businesse, yet had not Saint *Paul* beene accepted himselfe, the prayers of all the men in the world would have done him but little good. God may heare the prayers of the godly for wicked men, when they doe not pray themselves, in temporall things; so he did heare *Moses* for *Pharoah*, *Abraham* for *Abimelech*; and he may heare godly men the sooner for others prayers; so he heard *Aaron* and *Miriam* the sooner, for *Moses* his sake, *Numb.* 12. 13. But if God stir up thy heart to pray for thy selfe, as well as others for thee; then God that gave thee a heart to pray, hath heard thy prayers also, and hath had a respect to them more in it then to theirs, because it concerned thy selfe, as a more speciall mercy unto thee.

Chap. V.

Common *directions helpfull in all cases and prayers. First from such* Observations *as may be taken, from* before, *and* in praying.

HAving premised these Cases, I come now to more *generall* and *common directions* to help you in discerning and observing the mind of God, and his answers to you in your prayers. All which directions are such, as may be helpfull in all the forementioned cases, and in all sorts of prayers whatever. And they are taken from *observations*, to be made upon your prayers, &c. Both *before*, *in*, and *after* praying.

§. 1. *Before*: when God prepares the heart to pray.

First, *Before praying*, when God bespeaks a prayer (as I may so speak, that is, when God secretly speaks to the heart to pray much about a thing; I expresse it thus according to that phrase of *David*, Psal. 27. 8. *Thou saidst, Seeke my face*: and I said, *Thy face*

face Lord will I ſeek; Now God then ſpeaks to the heart to pray, when not onely he puts upon the duty by ſaying to the conſcience, This thou oughteſt to doe: but Gods ſpeaking to pray is ſuch, as his ſpeech at firſt was, when he made the world, when he ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was light:* ſo he ſayes, Let there be a prayer, and there is a prayer, that is, he powres upon a man *a ſpirit of grace and ſupplication*, a praying diſpoſition; he puts in motives, ſuggeſts arguments and pleas to God; all which you ſhall finde come in readily, and of themſelves; and that likewiſe with a quickning heat, and inlargement of affections, and with a lingring, and longing, and reſtleſneſſe of ſpirit to be alone, to powre out the ſoule to God, and to vent and forme thoſe motions and ſuggeſtions into a prayer, till you have laid them together, and made a prayer of them. And this is a *ſpeaking* to the heart: and obſerve ſuch times when God doth thus, and neglect them not; then to ſtrike, whilſt the iron is hot; thou haſt then his eare, it is a ſpeciall opportunity for that buſineſſe, ſuch an one as thou mayeſt never have the like. Suitors at Court obſerve *molliſſima fandi tempora*, their times of begging, when they have Kings in a good mood, which they will be ſure to take the advantage of; but eſpecially if they ſhould finde that the King himſelfe ſhould begin of himſelfe to ſpeak of the buſineſſe which they would have of him: and thus that phraſe of *Pſal.* 10. 17. is underſtood by ſome, that *God prepares the heart, and cauſeth the eare to heare*; that is, he faſhions it, and compoſeth it into a praying frame. And ſure it is a great ſigne that God meanes to heare us when himſelfe ſhall thus indite the Petition.

The difference between Satans unreaſonable urging us to pray, and God moving us.

And by the way let me give this note of difference, betweene theſe *ſpeakings* to the heart, and thoſe whereby Satan puts us upon ſuch duties at unſeaſonable houres and times; as when we are otherwiſe neceſſarily to be employed in our callings, to eate or to ſleepe, &c. then to put upon praying is a device of his he uſeth, to try out new converts with. The difference will appeare in this; the devill comes in a violent imperious manner upon the conſcience, but inlargeth not the heart a whit unto the duty: but whenſoever God at ſuch extraordinary by-times doth call upon us, he fits and prepares the heart, and fills the ſoule with holy ſuggeſtions, as materialls for the duty; for whatſoever he

he calls to, he gives abilities withall to the thing he calls for.

And thus uſually when he will have any great matters done and effected, he ſets mens hearts aworke to pray, by a kind of gracious pre-inſtinct; he ſtirres them up, and toucheth the ſtrings of their hearts, by his Spirit ſent downe upon them: Thus againſt the returne of the captivity he ſtirred up *Daniels* heart, *Dan.* 9. 1. *He knowing by Books*, the time to be neere expiring, was ſtirred up to *ſeeke God*: and ſo he that made this *Pſalme*, *Salvation being then nigh*, *ver.* 9. 10. then God ſtirred him up to pray, and pen this prayer for their returne: which God had foretold he would doe, *Jer.* 29. 10, 11, 12. For having promiſed *ver.* 10. *I will cauſe you to returne after ſeventy yeares*: *Then* (ſayes he, *ver.* 12.) *ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall goe and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you*: he ſpeakes it not onely by way of command, what it was they ought to doe; but as prophecying alſo what they ſhould doe; for then he meant to ſtirre up their hearts; as then he did, as appeares by thoſe fore-mentioned inſtances. Therefore obſerve what things, God, thus by an inſtinct, doth enlarge thy heart to pray for at times, and ſometimes at extraordinary by-times, when haply thou dideſt not think to pray about any ſuch thing, yet he then ſtirred thee up moſt, it may be, as thou wert walking, &c. and having ſpare time, he drawes thee into his preſence, and moves thee in that manner ſpecified.

§. 2. 2. *In prayer*: Gods *ſpeaking* to the heart in prayer, an evidence of hearing: which may be diſcerned,

Now ſecondly: as God thus ſpeakes to the heart to pray, ſo alſo *in praying*; and his *ſpeaking* to the heart *in prayer* may be diſcerned by theſe particulars.

1. By giving a quiet reſt of ſpirit about the thing prayed for in and by prayer.

1. When God quiets, and calmes, and contents the heart in *prayer*, which is done by ſpeaking ſomething to the heart, though what is ſpoken, be not alwayes diſcerned: If you ſhould ſee one, who was an earneſt and importunate ſuitor, and exceeding anxious when he went in to a great man, but behold him after comming out from him contented, and quieted, and cheerefull in his ſpirit, you would conceive that certainly ſomething had been ſaid to him, which gave him encouragement, ſatisfaction, and contentment in his ſuit; Thus when thou doeſt to God, and haſt been importunate in a buſineſſe, (as ſuppoſe for Chriſt, *Oh give me* Chriſt,

or

or elſe I die!) and thy deſires were exceedingly up for it; But thou riſeſt up with thy mind calmed and ſatisfied, and feeleſt the anxiouſneſſe, the ſolicitude of thy heart about the things taken off, and diſpelled, This is a good ſigne that God hath heard thy *Prayer*, and hath ſpoken ſomething to thy heart, which makes it thus compoſed. When *Hannah* out of much bitterneſſe, and with ſtrong deſire (which by a long delay hath beene made more violent, ſo as her heart was much diſquieted (for, *Prov.* 13.12. *Hope*, and by the ſame reaſon, deſire alſo *deferred makes the ſoule ſick*) when out of the abundance of her griefe, *ſhe had poured her ſoule out before the Lord*, 1 Sam. 1.16. *Eli* the *Prieſt* joyning in prayer alſo for her, *The Lord grant thy petition*: after that prayer ſhe found her heart ſo quieted, *that ſhe looked no more ſad*, as the Text ſaies there: She aroſe quieted, and calmed, and it was that prayer, that did both fill *Elies* mouth, with that word of prophecy, and her heart with quietneſſe, and a ſecret word from God accompanying it, that did ſtill thoſe waves; and accordingly God gave her a Son, a Son of her deſires. And the like God doth now; by ſpeaking (as I ſaid) ſomething to the heart: as by dropping in ſome promiſe or other into the heart, or ſome like conſideration; ſaying as it were to the heart, even as *Eli* from God did to her, *The Lord grants thy petition*; As to Saint *Paul*, when he was earneſt with God about removing his buffetings by *Satan* (which whether they were the ſtirring up a luſt, or temptations of *Blaſphemy*, I doe not now diſpute) *I beſought God thrice*, that is, earneſtly (ſayes he,) *that it might depart*; and to this he had an anſwer in the meane time given him till it ſhould be taken away; enough to ſtill and quiet him, ſo 2 *Cor.* 12. 8, 9. And *he ſaid*, that is, in *prayer* the Lord did put in this conſideration and promiſe into his thoughts, And *he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee, and my power is made perfect in weakneſſe*: This anſwer thus comming in, this promiſe thus ſeaſonably ſuggeſted, ſtayed and quieted *Pauls* heart. In like manner thou haſt (it may be) been long *praying* againſt poverty, or the like diſtreſſe, and God lets fall this or the like promiſe into thy heart, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*, which quiets and contents thy minde. This is an anſwer, and obſerve ſuch anſwers, for they are precious. Heb. 13. 5.

§. 3. 2. When God draws nigh & reveales His love in and upon such a petition.

2. If whilst thou art a *praying*, God doth draw nigh to thy soul, and revealeth himselfe to it, in and upon such, or such a particular petition. As in case thou didst mainely intend when thou didst begin to pray, to set thy selfe to beg some temporall mercy at his hands, some great matter for the good and prosperity of the Church, (as *David Chap. 9. did set himselfe* to seeke God for the returne of the captivity:) and even before thou commest to aske it, or in asking it, God smiles upon thee, welcomes thee, falleth about thy neck and kisseth thee: This thou art to observe as a signe he heares thy *prayer*, and accepteth both thee and it; when there is such a strong sense of God s favour, and presence, whilest thou art upon such a suit and request, more then at other times, or then in other passages of the same *prayer*, this is a token God hears thee, in that particular, and thou art to observe this his speaking to thy heart: When thus thou shalt no sooner come into his presence to enquire of him, but he sayes, *Here I am*, as the promise is, *Esay* 58. 9. Therefore *Psal.* 69. 17, 18. *Heare me speedily*, sayes *David*, *and* (that I may know thou hearest me) *draw nigh to me*: therefore when God draws nigh to thee, it is a signe hee heares thee. *Daniel* having *fasted* and *prayed* for three weekes together, *Dan.* 10. 2, 3. Then an *Angel* came, and one of the three *Persons* came and told him he was a man *greatly beloved*, *ver.* 11. and 19. When in like manner God by his Spirit comes downe, and meets thee, and tells thy heart in secret that thou art *His beloved*, and *He is thine*, then thy *prayers* are certainly heard: for if he accepts thy person, much more thy *prayers*, 1 *John* 5. 19, 20. Men, false men, (*false upon the ballance*, as *David* speakes, when they come to be tryed and weighed) they will out of cunning use suitors most kindly then, when they meane to put them off, and deny them their requests: But God who is truth and faithfulnesse it selfe, doth not use so to deale, but when he meanes to answer the *prayer*, He withall sometimes reveales his free grace most, to the end they may see and acknowledge the fountaine of all, to be his everlasting love, and so take the thing granted as a fruit of it, and thereby come to be the more abundantly thankfull.

A caution: That yet this is not alwaies an infallible signe the thing is granted, though that the prayer is accepted.

Onely let me adde this Caution, which may be of great use to you. That it is not alwayes infallibly true, that when God draws.

draws nigh to you in a particular requeſt, That that requeſt in particular, ſhall be granted in that manner you deſired; but it is a certaine evidence that thy *prayer* is heard, and that the thing thou askeſt is agreeable to his will, and that he approves of thee and thy requeſt exceedingly, and thinketh the better of thee for it, and he will give thee it, or ſomething that is better. There may be herein and ſometimes is a miſtake of Gods meaning, to think that alwayes, then the thing ſhall be granted, when God draws nigh to a man: experience ſometimes ſhews the contrary.

Queſt. But you will ſay, Why doth God draw ſo nigh if he meanes not to grant it?

Anſw. The reaſons why God ſometimes draws nigh when he grants not the thing.

1. He ſhews thereby His *approving will* of the thing *prayed* for. Now God approves many things, he decrees not. There is his *approving will*, and his decreeing will. God may ſhew his *approving will* of the thing thou askeſt, (as ſuppoſe it be in view a matter which is of great conſequence for the Church;) which he doth for thy encouragement: but yet it follows not, that his decreeing will is for the accompliſhment of that very thing in particular.

2. God may accept the perſon and the *prayer* when he doth not grant the thing prayed for; and by that drawing nigh witneſſe his acceptation of thy perſon and the *prayer*. Yea,

3. That revealing of himſelfe is oftentimes all the anſwer he intended to ſuch a *prayer*, and it is anſwer enough too, to injoy in the ſtead of a particular mercy the aſſurance of Gods love. As ſuppoſe thou didſt pray againſt ſome evill comming upon his Church, which he yet intends to bring; which he did ſet thy heart aworke to *pray* againſt, thereby to manifeſt the ſincerity thereof; and then he ſeeing thee thus ſincere draws nigh to thee, and tells thee, however, it ſhall goe well with thee, and that thou art greatly beloved of Him: Thou art ſometime to take this for all the anſwer he meanes to give. And this he doth ſometimes alſo to content the heart, and prepare it for a deniall in the thing: whereas otherwiſe the deniall of what a Chriſtian hath beene earneſt in, might occaſion (as in many it doth) a queſtioning and doubting of Gods love.

§. 4. God sometimes stirs up a particular faith of assurance in some businesse.

3. When *God stirres* up in the heart a particular faith in a businesse: as sometimes He doth, and upholds the heart to wait for it maugre all discouragements. So he did in *David*, *Psal.* 27. 3. *David* was then in great hazards by reason of *Saul* or *Absolom*, and those such and so often, as that to sense and outward probabilities he was like never to live quietly againe at *Jerusalem*, and enjoy Gods Ordinances there in peace; but for this *David* had *prayed*, and had made it as the grand request of his whole life (as every man hath some more great request of all other, even as He hath some speciall grace above all other, or gift, &c. so request to God next to his salvation, as haply for his Ministery, or the like, therefore sayes *David* ver. 4. *This one thing have I desired*) and accordingly God gave him a speciall faith in this thing above oll other, becaus it was his great request, *In this will I be confident, ver.* 3. And though *an hoste* of men should againe and againe *incompasse me*, saies he, yet *in this I will be confident*, that I shall still escape, and see *Jerusalem* againe, and enjoy the Ordinances and live in *peace*; and though his *faith* failed him often (as in the persecution of *Saul* it did) for he said he *should one day perish by the hand of Saul:* yet at other times his faith was marvellously upheld, and he was *confident* in this. He used not to be so, in other requests thus absolutely particularly and distinctly, and therefore he sayes, *In this, &c.* As there is a witnesse of the *Holy Ghost* immediate to the heart sealing up adoption to a mans person, so in some cases, there is the like testimony for the obtaining of some eminent thing we have asked. Which particular special faith, doth in a kind of similitude answer to the faith of miracles of old, whereby a man had a particular confidence that God would do such a miracle by him: so in and by meanes of prayer, in some things there may be a particular strengthening and assuring the heart, that God will doe such a thing for a man: which I confesse is rare and extraordinary, as also that immediate testimony concerning our persons is, which many want that goe to heaven. And haply this other concerning the accomplishment of speciall mercies, is much more rare; and but in some businesses; and is a thing which some men are not acquainted with, but yet may be in some cases existent to some mens spirits, as it was to *Davids* in the thing mentioned.

1 Sam. 27. 1.

And

A caution, that herein a conditionall evidence be not taken for absolute.

And concerning this also I will also adde a Caution, as about the former. That it doth not alwayes fall out upon all such kind of evidences made to a mans spirit, and that by God, that the thing prayed for doth come to passe. For these very perswasions stirred up by God may be and are often but *conditionall*, though thus immediately made to a mans spirit, and are so to be understood, and peremptory, and absolute. It cannot be imagined that all these should alwayes be of greater absoluteness and peremptorines, then were many of those revelations made by God to the Prophets, wherein He manifested his gracious purpose towards such a man or people, either to vouchsafe them such a mercy, or bring such a judgement; which forewarnings though they were particular and expresse, yet limited and intended with a condition, according to the performance, or not performance of which, it fell out, either the judgment expresly threatned was diverted, or that good thing which was as directly and fully promised, was not bestowed: as it was in the case of *Jonas* threatning the destruction of *Nineveh*; and so in the promise concerning *Ely's* house, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. *I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me for ever, but now the Lord sayes, it shall not be so:* For they had broken the condition which was implied in it; they had despised the Lord, *and them that despise me*, sayes God there, *I will despise*. In like manner is Gods meaning expressed towards us in such like perswasions wrought in us by prayer, to be understood; as that such mercies will surely come to passe, but still under a condition of obedience, and performing of those vowes, which a man joyned with those his petitions, to move the Lord to grant the things, which if a man faile in, or ceaseth to goe on to beleeve, it may and doth often come to passe, that things fall out contrary to that perswasion, and then we are apt to question whether it was from God or no: which it might be, and truly wrought by his Spirit, and yet not alwayes absolutely meant, (that was your mistake so to take it) but conditionally onely. For in such great requests of the soule unto *God*, there use to passe mutuall covenants betweene God and us; and Indentures are drawne and sealed unto by us; that is, we in prayer, offer and promise to doe thus and thus, if God will vouchsafe us such a mercy, & plead it to God to move

him to bestow it; and God, he thereupon (it may be) seales a covenant on his part to grant the thing, and works such an undoubted perswasion; but if we in that *interim* of waiting for that mercy, doe deale falsely in that covenant which we made; and this even whilest we are yet in dependance upon God for it, whereby it appeares that we would have done so much more after we should have received it once; in this case God denies the thing, and yet notwithstanding, that perswasion and evidence was from God that heard the prayer. He said indeed he would doe thus and thus for thee: (as he told *David*, *I would have given thee much more:*) because thou saidst to him, thou wouldst walke thus and thus, or didst vow this or that to him; thou failest in thy word, upon which God uttered his; and thereupon sayes God as to *Ely*, *Now it shall not be so*, and yet God had spoken it afore, and not Satan, nor thine owne heart onely.

§. 5. When God puts a restlesse importunity into the heart, to pray for a particular mercy.

4. When God doth put a restlesse importunity into the heart, maugre all discouragements. So in that *Psal.* 27. 4. *One thing I have desired, and I will seeke after it*, that is, as I have sought it, so I will not leave seeking to God for it: when God maintaines this in the heart, it is a signe he heares and will answer: for you know the Parable, that the *unjust Judge* heard her for her *importunity*; therefore when God puts an importunity into the heart, he meanes to heare.

A double importunity: one accepted, not the other.

Onely this likewise is to be added in this, There is a double importunity: one out of such an inordinate desire to a thing, as the heart knows not how to be without such a mercy, and so continues to aske, but *asketh amisse*, and so *receives not*, *Jam.* 5. But there is an importunity joyned with a subjection to *Gods* will, which when it runs along with it, then God hath stirred it up, and then looke for something to come; otherwise you may be importunate, as *they seeke me daily*, when yet God heard not, *Esay* 58. 2.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Farther Observations *to be made, on the dispositions and carriage of our hearts,* after *Prayer: untill the issue of the thing prayed for.*

NExt: *after thou hast prayed,* observe, what God doth towards thee.

§. 1. When God gives an obedient heart, in walking before him.

As first, how he doth guide thy feet and heart *after praying:* there is much in that: that which was the Spirit of supplication in a man when he prayed, rests upon him as the spirit of obedience in his course; so as that dependance he hath upon God for the mercy hee seeks for, is a speciall motive, and meanes to keepe him fearefull of offending, and diligent in duty; to looke to his paths, to walke and behave himselfe as becomes a suitor, as well as to come and pray as a suitor. Thus *David,* he walked by this principle, *Psal. 66.* 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not heare me*; that consideration still came in as a curb unto sin; and without this a man provokes God, and so casts himselfe behinde hand againe, and by sinning loseth what ground he had got by praying. Therefore *David, Psal.* 145. 8, 9, 10. when he was to pray, even as for his life, (as then he did, it being a deliverance from his enemies he sought) he specially prayes God to direct him and keepe him, that he might not sinne against hm; for he knew by sinning he should enervate and spoile all his prayers: not onely *heare me speedily,* (sayes he) but also *Cause me to know the way wherein I should walke; to Teach me to doe thy will*; this he especially prayes for, and more then for deliverance, for else he knew God would not heare him. Therefore when thou art in treaty with God for any mercy, observe, doth God still after praying keepe thee in a more obedient frame of spirit? it is a signe he intends to answer thee; as in like manner, when he keeps thee from using ill meanes, &c. When he meant to give *David* the Kingdome, he kept him innocent, and his heart tender, that it *smote* him but for *cutting off the lap of Sauls garment:* he was not so tender after. Therefore in *Psal.* 18. when he was delivered from all his enemies, he sayes, *God dealt with him according to his uprightnesse: for I kept my selfe from mine iniquity.* So also *Psal.* 27. 11.

2. When

2. When God gives a heart to wait for and expecteth mercy.

2. When *God* after prayer ſtrengthneth the heart to wait for the mercy. So *Pſal. 27. ult. David* having prayed, ſayes to his ſoul, *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he will ſtrengthen thy heart.* Honeſt men when they nouriſh hopes in one that is in dependance on them, who waiteth and is obſequious upon the hopes he hath of a ſuit, uſe not to deny him: it were diſhoneſty in them to keep a man under hand, and then fruſtrate his expectations: Therefore when God keeps thy ſoule after praying in ſuch a dependant frame, look for ſome good anſwer. And indeed when a man hath prayed long, in the end he begins to *wait* (as I may ſo ſay) *rather then pray* (though he pray ſtill) becauſe now he looks God ſhould performe: before, and at firſt he told the Lord he *deſired* it, but now he can with ſome boldneſſe tell him, that *he waits for it and expects it.* The *hope* of a godly man and his expectation *ſhould make him aſhamed* if it were not anſwered, therefore in this caſe anſwers uſe to come.

Both theſe two laſt we have together joyned, *Pſal.* 37. 34. *Waite on the Lord, and keepe his wayes, and he ſhall exalt thee.*

Chap. VII.

Obſervations *to be made* after *prayer, upon the* iſſue *of what was prayed for: and firſt,* if accompliſhed, *whether as the fruit of prayers, or out of common providence; Helps herein.*

When a man hath thus waited, and kept his way, then let him obſerve the *iſſue* and concluſion of what he ſought for, how things are caſt by God. Now of *neceſſity*, one of theſe two muſt fall out, that either the thing deſired is *accompliſhed*, or *not accompliſhed*; and in either of theſe he may come to ſpie out anſwers to his prayers; for prayer may be anſwered, though the thing be not done.

I meane to inſiſt ſeverally on theſe.

§. 1. God ſometimes anſwers the prayer fully in the way and manner deſired.

1. If the thing thou prayedſt for doth come to paſſe, then what needeſt thou doubt of an anſwer, and whether God heard thee or no? For thou beholdeſt it with thine eyes: and ſo often it falls out that God doth grant according to the deſires of a mans heart; and not onely ſo, but alſo *fulfills his counſell* therein,

in, as it is *Pſal.* 20. 4. that is, fulfils not onely his deſire, and aime of his prayer, but in that very way, by that very meanes, which his judgement and counſell pitcht upon in his owne thoughts. The *deſire* of the heart may be ſatisfied, when God gives ſome other thing, but the *counſell of* the heart is then fulfilled, when a man is anſwered in that particular, which his owne judgement pitcht upon as beſt for him. For counſell is an act of the underſtanding, deliberating about meanes to an end, and directing to chooſe a particular meanes tending to an end: ſo that as *Eliphaz* ſayes to *Job* 22. 27, 28. *Thou ſhalt make thy prayer to God, and he ſhall heare thee: and decree a thing, and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed to thee*, that is, a man is guided to decree and pitch upon ſuch mercies in his prayers, as God makes good in particular: he ſayes what he would have, and God performes it: and this priviledge thou ſhalt have (ſaies *Eliphaz* there) if thou wilt turne to him, and be *acquainted with him*, and *receive the Law from his mouth*: thou ſhalt not erre in praying; but what thou ſetteſt upon to pray for, ſhall be accordingly granted to thee: ſuch a man ſhall have the priviledge, *Fingere ſibi fortunam* in a right ſenſe, to be his owne chooſer, and carver of his owne mercies; and as Chriſt ſaid, *Be it according to thy faith*, ſo *God ſaies* ſometimes, *Be it according to thy prayers*; and *Eliphaz* ſpeakes of it as of a ſpeciall favour; that whereas other mens prayers are anſwered obliquely, thine ſayes he ſhall be anſwered directly, which are more comfortable; as direct beames are, and have more heate in them then collaterall and oblique. Thus if a man will heare God and obey him, God will heare him: for if a man be ſubject to *Chriſts Kingly Office*, his *Propheticall Office* ſhall guide him, and cauſe him not to erre in his Petitions; but by an unerring providence and preinſtinct infuſed by his Spirit, God will ſo guide him, as to aske even that very thing which God intends to give; whereas of himſelf *he knows not what*, nor how to aske. So *David* asked long life, and *God gave it him*, *Pſal.* 21. 2, 3, 4. God not onely gave him his hearts deſire, but the *requeſt of his lips*, *ver.* 2. *Hannah* askt a ſonne, and God anſwered her in the very thing ſhe deſired, and therefore ſhe called him *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 20. *Becauſe* (ſaies ſhe) *I askt him of the Lord*: and *ver.* 27. *For this child I prayed, and the Lord* (did not give ano-

ther thing in ſtead of it, but *) hath given me my Petition I aſked of him.* So, 1 *Chron.* 4. 10. *Jabeſh called on God,* (tis ſaid) *and God granted him the thing he requeſted.* And thus *God* often deales with his children. And to this end hath God given us his *Spirit*; and made *Chriſt Wiſdome unto us*, who knows what is good for us, though we doe not. And hath therefore alſo commanded us to ſpie out mercies for our ſelves, and then come to him for them: and to this end hath made ſuch particular promiſes of particular mercies, which he would have us have an eye unto in our prayers; all which is becauſe often he meanes to beſtow the very thing we aske.

Yet our hearts are often jealous whether it be an anſwer to prayer, or out of common providence.

And yet becauſe, although we have the very things we did aske and deſire, ſuch is the jealouſie and infidelity of our hearts, that we often diſcerne not, nor acknowledge that it was our prayers, that obtained them from God: but we are apt, when once we have them, either to look but to things below, and the ſecond cauſes of them, though before we did earneſtly ſeeke them of God, or elſe ſtill diſtruſtfully to queſtion whether or no it was at our prayers that he granted them, or out of common providence. Thus *Job* in his diſtemper, *Job* 9. 16. *although I had called, and God had anſwered me, yet* (ſayes he) *I would not beleeve that he had hearkned to my voice*, that is, not that he did it in reſpect to my prayer and requeſt, becauſe he now deales ſo ſeverely with me, *For he breaketh me with a tempeſt*, ver. 17. And thus doe our diſtruſtfull hearts, (which are apt to be unſatisfied with all the cleereſt pledges of Gods favour, and ſtill to miſconſtrue and pervert them,) although God doth anſwer us upon our calling upon him, yet we will not beleeve that he hearkened to our prayer in it. Therefore that you may be further inabled to diſcerne, how, and when things you prayed for, come in by prayer; I give you theſe further directions.

§. 2. Directions to helpe to diſcerne this.

1. From *the manner of Gods performance:* God diſcovers a more then ordinary hand of providence in things accompliſht by prayer: inſtanced and diſcovered in five particulars.

1. When God doth a thing in anſwer to prayers, he often doth it in ſuch a manner, that his hand may be in a more then ordinary manner ſeene in it. There are few prayers, wherein a man hath ſought God much, but in the anſwers of them God diſcovers himſelfe much, and turnes many great wheeles in the accompliſhment of them, and *manifeſts* (as *David* deſires, *Pſal.* 57. 7.) *his marvellous loving kindneſſe*; and indeed, when God hears

hears *prayers*, that have beene a long while a making, He ſhewes uſually halfe a miracle one way or other.

Now God diſcovers his immediate hand in the anſwers of our *prayers* many wayes.

1. When he carries a thing through many difficulties, when there were a great many croſſe wards in a buſineſſe *prayed* for, the leaſt whereof would have kept the key from turning: when God ſhall make (as it were) a key on purpoſe to unlocke it; when God plots and contrives all the paſſages in a buſineſſe thou didſt *pray* for, and ſo accompliſheth it; This is a ſigne, it is a fruit of *prayer*, and that *prayer* had beene a making that key all that while: So in bringing *David* to the Kingdome; *Joſeph* out of priſon; *Mordecai* to honour: and likewiſe Saint *Peter* out of priſon, which was done at the *prayers* of the Church, *Acts* 12. He was ſleeping betweene two Souldiers: if they had waked, he had beene diſcovered: and he was in chaines, but they fall off, *ver.* 6, 7. And the Keepers ſtood before the doore, but they mind him not, *ver.* 6. and when one watch is paſt, he paſſeth quietly through another, *ver.* 10. and when both theſe were paſt, an Iron gate flies open of its owne accord, *ver.* 10. Now much difficulties are there in many buſineſſes, which yet in the end are accompliſhed by *prayer*: Iron chaines fall off, Iron gates, enemies hearts flie open of their own accord; and though not in that miraculous manner, by the meanes of an *Angel*, yet no leſſe wonderfully.

1 By bringing it to paſſe, through many difficulties.

Or ſecondly when God facilitates all meanes to accompliſh the thing which was *prayed* for, ſo as all meanes doe in view conſpire and combine in it, that thou haſt winde and tyde, and a faire day, and all the way paved, or as *David* ſayes, *haſt thy way made plaine before thee*; and there falls out a great conjunction and meeting of many circumſtances together to effect it, which had influence into it, whereof if any one had beene wanting, haply the thing had not beene done; when the thing *prayed* for is thus granted, *prayer* then hath done it. Thus, when he delivered the people of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, which was the accompliſhment of their long deſires and *prayers* (*their cry came up*, the Text ſayes) how were all things facilitated! they that detained them to themſelves, come and intreate them to goe out, *yea are urgent*,

Or ſecondly by facilitating all the meanes, and cauſing them to conſpire to accompliſh it.

Exod. 12. 31, 33. 35.

urgent, ſayes the Text; and that at *midnight*: any, hire them to goe out, with their eare-rings; and *Pharaoh* himſelfe then parts
ver. 32. lovingly and fairely with them, and deſires their *prayers*, *Bleſſe me alſo*. Yea, to ſhew there was no reſiſtance, the Text ſayes, *a Dog did not move his tongue*: The brute creatures did not diſturbe them, though at midnight, when thoſe Creatures uſe to be moſt obſtreperous through noiſes.

3. By bringing it to paſſe ſuddenly and unexpectedly.

3. When he doth it ſuddenly, and accompliſheth the thing thou haſt long *prayed* for, ere thou art aware of it: as the returne of the Captivity of *Babylon*, which was the concluſion of many *prayers*, was done in a trice, *they were as men in a dreame*, *Pſal.* 126. 1. They could ſcarce believe it was ſo, when it was done, it was becauſe they had *ſowne* many *prayers* which *came up* on the ſudden, *ver.* 5, 6. So *Peter*, he was faſt aſleepe, and did not ſo much as dreame of deliverance. So *Joſephs* delivery out of priſon, and advancement to be the greateſt man in the Kingdome, the ſuddenneſſe of it ſhewed it was Gods remembring of him, and hearing his prayers.

4. By doing above what was deſired with addition of other mercies.

4. When God grants the thing with an overplus, above what we did aske, and caſteth many other mercies in together with that which we long prayed for; this alſo may be a ſigne God did heare our prayers in it: for when he doth heare indeed, he uſeth *to doe above what we did aske or thinke*, thereby the more to overcome the heart. So *David* asked *long life*, and he gave him more then he asked, *Pſal.* 21. 2, 3, 4, 5. So *Solomon* he asked but *wiſdome*, and he gave him more then he asked, *Peace*, *Riches*, *Honour*, and all with it, 1 *King.* 3. 12, 13. *Hannah* ſhe asked but one male childe, 1 *Sam.* 1. 10. but God gave her three ſonnes more and two daughters, *Chap.* 2. 21. When prayers are anſwered, uſually mercies come thick, they come tumbling in; the thing we prayed for comes not alone; as when ſinnes are puniſhed, then miſeries alſo they come like armies in troops upon
Jam. 1. 2. us: as *temptations* likewiſe come together, and *we fall into many of them* at once, as Saint *James* ſpeakes: Thus doe mercies alſo.

5. By adding ſome ſpeciall circumſtance as a token of Gods ſpeciall hand in it.

5. When the thing is granted by prayers, there is often ſome particular circumſtance of providence concurrent with it, which is a token for good, and ſealeth to us that it is from God; ſuch often

often as a man himſelfe takes notice of, and which others take notice of alſo. *Shew me a token for good* ſayes *David*, Pſal. 86. 17. *that others may ſee it and be aſhamed:* and ſuch tokens doth *God* often make ſmall circumſtances to be. Things ſmall in themſelves, may be *magna indicia*, great ſignes and tokens: for example, *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and the *Iſraelites*, had long cryed to God for the deliverance of his people, and laid up many prayers; *their cry come up* as was ſaid; and when God doth deliver them, what tokens were there of good? and of Gods hand in it, and of his anſwer to their prayers? The Text notes (as was obſerved before) *that a dog did not barke at their going out*, Exod. 11. 7. which was a ſmall circumſtance, but it was *magnum indicium*, and ſo intended by God; for the Text addes, *That yee may know that God puts a difference betweene the Iſraelites and the Egyptians.* This was a token of Gods hand, to over-rule the tongues of rude brute creatures, that uſe to ſtir at ſuch unuſuall noiſes, and at travellers eſpecially in the night. So when *Iſaac* and *Abraham*, and his ſervant alſo, had prayed for a Wife for *Iſaac*, ſee by what a token God ſhewed he had heard their prayers, *Rebekkah* was the firſt that came out to the ſervant ſent to bring a wife for him: and if ſhe be the woman appointed for *Iſaac*, (ſayes the ſervant) *Let her offer me drinke and my Camels alſo:* this was a ſmall thing in appearance, but a great *indicium* of Gods hand in it, and therefore the ſervant *bowed* at it, and *worſhipped:* and the ſigne in it ſelfe was ſuch, as argued a good nature in her, and a kinde courteous diſpoſition, which therefore (it may be) he ſingled out, as a token of a meet wife, as a thing eſpecially to be looked at in the marriage choiſe. Gen. 24. 13, 14

§. 3. Obſervation from the time wherein the thing prayed for is accompliſht, as,

Againe, the conſiderations of the *time*, wherein the things we have asked, are granted, may much helpe us to diſcerne, whether it be in anſwer to our prayers. For God, who doth all things in *weight and meaſure*, ſhews his *Wiſdome* and *love*, as much in the *ſeaſon*, as in giving the thing it ſelfe. God conſidereth all times of thy life, and ſtill chooſeth the beſt and fitteſt to anſwer thy prayers in, *In an acceptable time have I heard thee.* So *Eſay* 49. 8. As *David* (in like manner ſayes) he prayed *in an acceptable time*, *Pſal.* 69. 13. So accordingly God anſwers in the beſt and moſt acceptable time to us; for *he waites to be gracious, for he is a God*

of judgement, *Esay* 30. 18. that is, He is a wise God that knows the fittest times and seasons, wherein to shew kindnesse, and to deale forth his favours in.

1. Sometime the thing is accomplisht about the time wherein we are most instant in prayer.

As first, it may be, that at that very time when thou hast been most instant and earnest, yea even whilst thou art a praying, or presently after, the think is done and accomplisht. To this purpose is that of *Esay* 65.24. That as sometimes *he heares before they call*,(which argues much love to give mercies unsought)so also *whilest they are speaking*, *I will heare*,and grant the thing,which argues no lesse love; and he cuts out that time on purpose, that they might rest assured it was in answer to their prayer. Thus to assure *Hezekiah* his prayer was heard, God sent the Prophet in unto him whilest he was a *praying* and *weeping*, with *his head turned towards the wall*. So *Isaac* going out to *pray* in the field, meets his *Rebekkah* then a comming; that blessing of a good Wife, being surely the great request temporall he was then in Treaty with God for: this *Rebekkah* was the fruit of many prayers. So when Saint *Peter* was in prison, the Church being gathered together to pray for him, Saint *Peter* comes and knocks *at the same houre*, *Acts* 12. from the 12. *ver.* to the 18. So as it often falls out herein, as to the Ruler in the Gospel, *John* 4. 52. who *inquiring* diligently, *found that the same houre that Christ had said to him*, *Thy son liveth*, *his son recovered*, *and so he beleeved*, *and his whole howshold*: So also here, that sometimes the thing is done, or the news of it comes the same houre or soone after, wherein a man was praying about it, and haply then when the heart was most stirred about it, more then at any time else: this is a signe it was an answer of prayers, and may helpe to confirme a mans faith in it, as that also did his.

Gen. 24. 63.

2. When granted in the fittest time.

Or secondly, when it is the most acceptable and every way the fittest time to have the thing granted. At that time 1 when thou *hadst most need*, *and* 2 when thy heart was *most fit for it*. For in answering prayers, God aimes especially at two things: 1 To *shew his mercy*,that a man might magnifie and exalt that: And 2 *To have the heart* satisfied and *filled with joy* and contentment in his answer, and the thing made sweet, and a mercy indeed to him: in briefe, that his *goodnesse might be delighted in*, and *his mercy exalted*. * And for these two purposes he cuts out such times, when

* The fittest time knowne two wayes.

when we have moſt need; and alſo when our hearts are moſt ſubdued, and our luſts mortified. For then we are fitteſt to reliſh his goodneſſe alone, and not to be drawne away with the carnall ſweetneſſe that is in the thing. The one you have expreſt, *Eſay* 30. 18. *He waites to be gracious to have his mercy exalted.* The ſecond intimated *James* 5. *Ye aske and receive not, becauſe ye aske amiſſe, to conſume upon your luſts*; Such prayers, whilſt the heart is in this temper, the Lord denies or deferres in mercy till the heart be weaned.

For the firſt of theſe: As, ſuppoſe thou didſt pray long for aſſurance of ſalvation, and joy in the holy Ghoſt, and when thou hadſt moſt need of it, either when *thy ſpirit would have failed* without it, as *Eſay* 57. 16. Or againſt ſome great affliction approaching, or ſome great encounter with the world for the Name of Chriſt, then God filled thy heart with it, &c. that was the fitteſt time: now hath God heard thy prayer. As Saint *Peter* he was in Priſon, and had beene ſo for many dayes, as appeares by the fourth and fifth *verſes*, *Acts* 12. God could have delivered him at any time, while the Church prayed for him, *verſe* 5. But God kept him in on purpoſe, till that very night, when in the next morning *Herod* meant to bring him forth to execution, and then God delivered him at the prayers of the Church; then was the moſt fit time; As the *Pſalmiſt* ſayes, *The full time to have mercy on him was come.* And then to receive an anſwer, is a ſigne God did it out of ſpeciall love, which love he *would have exalted by thee*, as *Eſay* 30. 18. 1. When we have moſt need. Pſal. 102. 11.

If 2. when thy heart was *moſt fit* for the mercy, it was granted, then art thou alſo heard in an acceptable time: For God doth not with-hold mercies from thoſe that are his, out of want of love; neither ſo much for what is paſt, as for the preſent evill diſpoſition of their hearts, whereby they are unfit to receive them: and in this ſenſe likewiſe may that be underſtood; that God *prepareth the heart*; and *heareth the Prayer*, *Pſal.* 10. 17. 2. When the heart was beſt prepared to receive it, and moſt weaned from it.

As firſt, when thy heart is moſt weaned from that temporall mercy (ſuppoſing it ſuch) granted thee upon ſeeking of it: So *David*, when he had the Kingdome in poſſeſſion given him; then when he was as a *weaned childe*, and had his high thoughts (which haply at the firſt news of it had riſen in his minde) purged out,

out, *Pſal.* 131. 2. *I have no high thoughts, &c.* ſayes he then; Thus, when thy heart had let all carnall ends goe, and had betaken it ſelfe alone to God, for thy portion to be had alone out of him, then the thing prayed for comes to paſſe: this was the fitteſt ſeaſon.

Obiect. But you will be ready to ſay, To have a thing when my heart is taken off from it, and even contented not to have it, makes it to be as no mercy: for where there is no deſire, there is no rejoycing.

Anſw. If thy deſire be taken off the thing, then thou wilt rejoyce the more in God now; and though the thing of it ſelfe ſhould now give thee leſſe ſatisfaction, yet God by the thing will give thee more, and he will make it up, for thou wilt reliſh his love and ſweetneſſe in it now, which is *better then life*, and therefore much better then that thing enioyed; and indeed the violence of the deſire before, would have made it leſſe ſweet, for the thing alone would not have filled and contented that deſire, when it was an inordinate luſt, and ſo thou wouldſt have beene vexed with it, rather then ſatisfied, and found a greater vanity in it: but now when it is become a ſubordinate deſire unto God, that the deſire is downe, and the heart quieted and contented with God in the thing: the heart ſayes as ſhe ſaid, *I have enough.* So 2. likewiſe thou maiſt have an affliction thou prayedſt long againſt, taken off then, when thy heart was moſt willing to *accept thy puniſhment* (as *Moſes's* phraſe is), to ſubmit to God in it.

Lev. 16. 41.

§. 4. A third ſort of obſervations, from the anſwerable proportion between Gods dealing in the accompliſhment of it, and our prayers.

A third thing you are to obſerve concerning the accompliſhment of the thing prayed for, whereby you may diſcerne whether granted in anſwer to prayers, is, when thou ſeeſt God in his dealings with thee, and anſwering of thee, to deale in a kinde of proportion with thy manner of praying and ſeeking of him, and of walking with him whilſt thou wert dependant on him, for ſuch or ſuch a mercy. And as you may ſee a proportion between ſinnes and puniſhments, which are the rewards of them; that you can ſay, ſuch a ſinne brought forth this affliction, it is ſo like the Father: ſo you might ſee the like proportion betweene your prayers, and your walking with God, and Gods anſwers to you, and his dealings with you. So did *David*, *Pſal.* 18. 24. *According to the cleanneſſe of my hands hath he recompenced me, &c.*

His

His ſpeech notes ſome ſimilitude or likeneſſe: as for example, the more by-ends or carnall deſires you had in praying, and the more you mingled of theſe with your holy deſires, and the more want of zeale, fervency, &c. were found in your prayers, the more you ſhall (it may be) finde of bitterneſſe mingled with the mercy, when it is granted; and ſo much imperfection, and want of comfort in it: ſo ſayes *David* in the ſame *Pſal.ver.*25,26. *With the pure thou wilt ſhew thy ſelfe pure*, Pure prayers have pure bleſſings, *& è contra: With the froward thou wilt ſhew thy ſelfe froward:* and againe, as you in praying ſometimes ſlackned and grew cold, ſo you might ſee the buſineſſe in like manner to coole, and caſt backward: as when *Moſes hands were downe, Amaleck prevailed*; but when they were *lifted up, Iſrael* had the better, *Exod.*17.12. God let him ſee a proportion, which argued his prayer was the meanes of prevailing. A man finds in praying, that his ſuit ſometimes ſticks, and goes not as he expected, this is becauſe he gives not ſo good a fee as he was wont, and doth not ply *God*, and ſolicite him; but on the contrary, when he was ſtirred up to pray, then ſtill he found things to goe well: by this a man may cleerly ſee, that it was the prayer which God did heare and regarded. Thus likewiſe when a man ſees hils and dales in a buſineſſe, faire hopes often, and then all daſht againe, and the thing in the end brought to paſſe, let him looke back upon his prayers: didſt not thou in like manner juſt thus deale with God? When thou hadſt prayed earneſtly, and thought thou hadſt even carryed it, then daſh all againe, by interpoſing ſome ſinne, and thus againe and againe? Herein God would have you obſerve a proportion; and it may helpe you to diſcerne how, and when they are anſwered and obtained by prayer; becauſe God deales thus with you therein in ſuch a proportion to your prayers.

CHAP. VIII.

Seven Observations *more, from the effects which the accomplishment of the* mercy *hath upon the heart, &c.*

§. 1. If [illegible] granted draws the heart neerer to God and to rejoyce in his favour in it, more then in the thing Psal. 69. 22.

FOurthly thou mayest discerne whether they be in answer to thy prayers, by the effects upon thy heart.

As 1. If the thing that is granted upon thy prayers, draw thy heart more neere to God, it is then certaine, that it was granted as an answer to thy prayers. Things granted out of ordinary providence onely, doe encrease our lusts, and are snares to us: as *Saul* gave *David* his daughter *Michol* to be a snare to him: So *their full tables are made snares:* so God gave the *Israelites* their will, the things they desired, but withall *gave them up to their lusts, Psal.* 106. 15. he gave them their requests, but sent *leanenesse into their soules*; the Quailes might fat some of their bodies that survived, yet their soules grew leane, there was a curse upon their Spirits: this new delicate food made their bodies more lustfull, they *did eat and drinke, and rose up to play.* But things obtained by prayer are sanctified to us, for every thing *is sanctified by prayer*, so as it shall not insnare nor intangle our hearts: a thing obtained by prayer, as it came from God, so a man will returne it to God, and use it for his glory: So *Hannah* having obtained *Samuel* by prayer, she returnes him unto God, 1 *Sam.* 1. 27, 28. *For this childe I prayed, and God gave me my petition, and therefore also I have lent him to the Lord as long as he liveth.* If therefore thou findest this his dealing with thee in answering thee, to be a kindly motive to cause thee to mourne for sinne, and to be as a restraint against sinne, it is a signe it was the fruit of prayer. Thus it wrought with *David, Psal.* 6. 8. *Away from me ye that worke iniquity: God hath heard the voice of my weeping.*

Exod. 32. 6.

1 Tim. 4. 5.

Also if thou rejoycest in God, more then in the thing obtained: so *Hannah* begins her song when she blesseth God for her childe; *My heart rejoyceth in the Lord, &c.* 1 *Sam.* 2. 1. She rejoyceth not so much in the gift as in the giver; and his favour more in this, that her prayer was answered, then in the thing obtained: this is a signe of having obtained the mercy through prayers,

prayers, when it is thus ſanctified unto a mans ſpirit.

§. 2. Prayer anſwered enlargeth the heart with thankfulneſſe.

2. Prayers anſwered will inlarge thy heart with thankfulneſſe, and thus uſually they doe; ſelfe-love makes us more forward to pray, then to give thankes; for nature is all of the craving and taking hand: but where grace is, there will be no eminent mercy gotten with much ſtrugling, but there will be a continued particular thankfull remembrance of it a long while after, with much inlargement: and *As prayer abounded, ſo will thankſgiving abound alſo.* *Hannah* ſhe makes a ſong, 1 *Sam.* 1. 2. Great bleſſings that are wonne with prayer, are worne with thankfulneſſe: ſuch a man will not aske new, but he will withall give thanks for old. Thankfulneſſe, of all duties proceeds from pure grace, therefore if the ſpirit ſtirs thee unto it, it is a ſigne he made the prayer; *What thankes ſhall I render to God, for the joy I have in you* ſaith Saint *Paul*, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 9, 10? So in all his other Epiſtles, all thoſe he writes to, as he prayes for them, ſo he tells them, he gives thankes for them, and for their graces which he had prayed for. And if anſwering prayers for others, makes Saint *Paul* ſo thankfull, what when for himſelfe? Prayer and thankes, are like the double motion of the lungs, the ayre that is ſucked in by prayer, is breathed forth againe by thankes: Is thy heart afreſh inlarged, as to mourne for paſt ſins long ſince committed, ſo in like manner, to give thankes for mercies won with long prayers, and this for a long while after? it is a ſigne that they were obtained by prayer.

§. 3. If this encourageth thee to goe to God againe.

3. If the mercy obtained doth encourage thee to goe to God another time, to pray againe the more confidently and fervently, it is a ſigne thou haſt got the former that way: For the *Holy Ghoſt* having once ſhewed thee this way of procuring mercy, hence it is, thou art thus ready to take the ſame courſe another time, *Pſal.* 116. 2. *The Lord hath heard me, and I will call on him as long as I live.* I know (ſaies he) now what courſe to take if I be in any want, even to call upon him; and he calls upon others to doe ſo too.

§. 4. It makes a man carefull to performe his vowes made in prayer, to obtaine it.

4. When God having heard thy prayers upon ſolemne vowes made by thee, thy heart is made carefull to pay thoſe vowes which thou didſt make in the time of thy ſuing to God for that mercy, this may be an argument to thee, the thing being granted,

that thy prayer was heard. For first, it argues that thy heart it selfe doth secretly make such an account, that upon them God did grant the thing, and thou doest therefore make conscience to returne all againe to God in service, as the condition of thy Indentures made with him; and as a homage due, and an acknowledgement for ever, that such a mercy was won by prayer; and by this preserveſt the memory of the receit of that mercy: vowes being of the nature of homage: and secondly, in this also it is an evidence that the thing was obtained by prayer, in that God calls for those vowes from thee, by his Spirit in thy heart, and stirres thee up to perform them; it argues that in relation to thy prayers answered, he takes them as dues from thee, that having dispatcht thy suit, He now calls for what was agreed to be given him when it should be performed. And thirdly, in that also he doth accept the payment of these thy vows of thee, he acknowledgeth that those vowes and prayers were heard: for as *Manoah* said in another case, *If he meant to have destroyed us, he would not have accepted a sacrifice:* so in this case it may be said, if God had not heard thy prayers, he would not have accepted thy vowes after thy praying. Thus *David*, *Psal.* 66. 13, 14. *I will pay thee my vowes, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in my trouble*; the reason followes, verse 17. 19. Because that *Verily God hath heard me, when I cryed to him:* and so *Eliphaz* in *Job* doth connect and hang these two together, *Job* 22. 27. *Thou shalt make thy prayer to him, and he shall heare thee, and thou shalt pay thy vowes:* This which he speaks of paying his vowes, was not onely as it was to be his duty, but also as a consequent that would follow the other, that when his prayers should be heard, he thereupon would performe his vows: for his scope is to move *Job* to turne to God, shewing what benefit would accrue to him by it, and amongst others this: The hearing his prayers, and performing his vowes.

Judg. 13. 23.

§. 5. If a man sees by faith, and acknowledgeth Gods sole hand in the accomplishment.

5. When thou art inabled by faith, to see cleerly *Gods* hand shewed forth in the effecting of that mercy over and above the power of second causes, and to acknowledge it to his glory: for the truth is, one maine cavilling reason in our blind hearts, whereby we are usually hindred and put by from apprehending our prayers to be answered, when yet the thing is done, we shall finde

finde to be, that our eyes are terminated and bound in ſecond cauſes, and not raiſed to ſee Gods hand in the thing: Therefore on the contrary, when God inableth thee to ſee that he hath done thee this kindneſſe; ſo as thy minde is cleare in it, this is a fruit of his hearing thy prayers: And this you will uſually finde to be true, that *ſo much faith and dependance* as you had upon *God in prayer* for the obtaining of a mercy, *ſo much faith and acknowledgement you will have in the accompliſhment of it.* Parallel with this rule that other, which in another caſe is uſually given, that in performance of duties, ſo much as the ſoule did goe out of it ſelfe to God, for ſtrength to performe them, ſo much when they are performed, will the heart acknowledge *Gods* aſſiſtance and be humbled: And this is a ſigne of prayer being heard upon this ground, becauſe Gods end of hearing prayers is, that we *might glorifie him.* So *Pſal.* 50. 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me.* Therefore when the heart hath prayed much for a mercy, with dependance before the obtaining of it, and then is inabled to exalt God when it is obtained, it is a ſigne that God did it in relation to thoſe prayers. For there is that connexion made betweene theſe, as betweene the cauſe and the effect. *I will heare thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me. David,* when he was delivered out of all his troubles, (as when he made that 18. *Pſal.* he was, as appeares by the title of it) then at the 6 verſe, he relates how he had prayed and how he was heard; and ſee thereupon how his heart was enlarged to acknowledge God alone to have done all, in the reſt of that Pſalme; ſo from the 27. and alſo from the 31. ver. When we ſee Angels from God, beyond the power of ſecond cauſes deſcending, it is a ſigne, that prayers, as Angels, firſt aſcended, and obtained that mercy. Thus alſo the Church, *Eſay* 26. having obtained thoſe deliverances by prayer, ver. 17. (for which there ſhe makes that ſong by way of thankfulneſſe) ſhe aſcribes all unto God, ver. 12. *Thou haſt wrought all our works for us,* and ver. 18. *Verily we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth.*

§. 6. With the mercy, ſometimes a ſpeciall evidence comes in, that it is obtained by prayer.

6. When with the mercy there commeth the aſſurance of God love, and evidence of his favour; when God ſends not a bare token onely, but a letter alſo with it, to beare witneſſe of his

his love, in which the token is wrapt. I need not make that a ſigne, for when this comes with a mercy, it carries its owne evidence, you will then know well enough that it is the fruit of prayer.

§. 7. By the event things obtained by prayer, prove reall and ſtable mercies.

7. Laſtly, it will be evident by the *event*; things obtained by prayer have few thorns in them, the curſe is taken out, but what comes but by ordinary providence, comes as it were up of it ſelfe alone, and like the earth untilled, is full of thornes, and briers, and many vexations: The reaſon is, for what comes in by prayer comes as a bleſſing, and *ſo no ſorrow is added to it*; and alſo becauſe prayer killeth thoſe inordinate luſts, which is the cauſe of that vanity and vexation which is in the things enjoyed. *But When the bleſſing of God maketh rich, he addeth no ſorrow with it, Prov.* 10. 22. Things long deferred, at laſt obtained by prayer, prove moſt comfortable, and in a ſetled manner ſuch; they prove ſtanding and ſtable bleſſings; and what trouble the heart was put to in the deferring, it is recompenced by the more ſetled conſtant immixt ſweetneſſe in the enjoying; prayer having long perfumed it, and the thing being ſteeped therein, it proves exceeding pleaſant. So *Prov.* 13. 12. *Hope deferred makes* the *heart ſick, but when the deſire comes, it is a tree of life*, and heales that ſickneſſe, and abundantly comforts the heart. Thus *Iſaac* found *Rebekkah* a great bleſſing, and *a comfortable* wife to him, *Gen.* 24. *ult.* Such a comfort alſo was *Iſaac* to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 18, 19. *A ſon* indeed, *a ſon of laughter*, as his name ſignifies: and ſuch was *Samuel* to *Hannah*, ſhe had not onely a ſonne of him, but a good ſonne, a bleſſed ſonne, a Prophet, and the Judge of the people of God: whereas *Jacob* getting the bleſſing, but without prayer, how imbittered was it to him, (though a bleſſing to him in the event) by twenty years baniſhment from his mothers houſe? When *Iſrael* themſelves ſet up a King, but not *by me*, as God ſayes, what a puniſhment was he to them? *given in Wrath, and taken away in anger*: Hoſ. 13. 11.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Conſiderations *to quiet the heart, and to help it to diſcerne an anſwer to, and acceptation of the prayer* when the thing is not accompliſht.

§. 1. The thing prayed for is not alwayes granted, when yet the prayer is heard.

BUt now the next and more difficult queſtion is, *When the thing is not granted*, how ſhall we then diſcerne and know, that God doth notwithſtanding heare the prayer?

Concerning which, I muſt premiſe this, that it is true, that alwaies the very thing it ſelfe deſired is not granted, when yet the prayer is heard. Chriſt prayed, *the cup might paſſe from him*, which though ſome interpret the word *paſſing*, for the ſhort continuance of the brunt, and that therefore in that reſpect he was heard directly in what he asked: yet if ſo, why was that clauſe *if it be poſſible*, added? that argues his petition was for a totall removall, yet with ſubjection to Gods will; for he knew there was no great impoſſibility in a ſhort removall of it: nay, it was impoſſible but that it ſhould paſſe, *Act.* 2. 24. But howſoever, it is plaine in *Moſes*, about his going into *Canaan*: *Deut.* 3. 26. *I beſought the Lord*, ſayes he, *ver.* 23. *and he was angry with me and would not heare me, ver.* 26. Likewiſe ere I come to reſolve the caſe, an objection is alſo to be removed, which is;

That if the Spirit of God doth make every faithfull prayer in us, as *Rom.* 8. 26. it is ſaid he doth; *we know not what to pray for, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, &c.* and he *ſearcheth the deep things of God*, as it is ſaid, 1 *Cor.* 2. that therefore he knowing that God will not grant ſuch a thing, you may thinke that he ſhould not ſtirre up the heart to pray for that which God meanes to deny, but alwaies guide the heart aright, and not let us erre or miſſe in the things we *pray* for. To this, in briefe by way of anſwer.

An objection anſwered: That though the Spirit knowes Gods minde, and teacheth us what to pray for, yet the thing prayed for may not be granted.

1. The Spirit makes not prayers in us, alwayes according to what Gods ſecret will and foreknowledge is, but according to his revealed will to us, both in his word and in his providence, as things therein are preſented to us, and doe lie before our view, and ſo not alwaies according to what he meanes to doe, but according to what it is our duty to pray moſt for: for he concurs to

to assist us to *pray*, as he doth in *preaching* or using other such like meanes and Ordinances, wherein though the Spirit knows whom God meanes to convert, whom not, yet he assists us Ministers in our spirits oftentimes as much to *preach* to those he meanes not to convert, as to those he meanes to convert: He dealing with us therein according to what is our duty, not according to what is his decree.

Againe, secondly, that phrase helps to answer this, when he is said to *help our infirmities*, and therefore not according to his owne vast knowledge, doth he frame our *prayers*, but so as he applies his assistance to our infirme, weake, and narrow apprehensions: and stirres up desires in us to such things, as according to our knowledge we are in duty to conceive, and which by all we can see, by what is afore us revealed in his providence, we think to be most for our good, and his glory; and God accepts such *desires as from us*, but yet *doth for us* according to the largenesse of his owne love.

§. 2. A mistake to pray absolutely for such blessings as are not absolutely promised.

And so now to come to the case propounded, and therein unto helps to pacifie, and direct the heart about those *prayers* at which the things are not granted.

And first, how diddest thou frame thy *prayer* for that thing which is denyed thee? Didst thou *pray* for it absolutely, and peremptorily, as simply best for thee? thou must not then thinke much, if such a *prayer* be denied, for therein thou wentest beyond thy commission: but if thou didst pray for it conditionally, and with an [if] as *Christ* did, *if it be possible*, (which instance is a strong ground for such kind of *prayers*) and, *not my will, but thy will be done*, so, as thou didst referre it unto, and trust *Gods* judgement in the thing, and not thine owne, onely didst put him in minde as thy duty was, of what was represented to thee as best for thee in view, and so left it to him to cast, and didst referre to His will and wisdome: * Then thy *prayer* may be most fully answered and heard, and yet the thing denyed, and thou art to interpret, and take Gods meaning and minde revealed in the event in the best sense which way soever it falls: for otherwise, Christ had not been heard, when yet, the Text sayes, *He was heard in all he feared, Heb.* 5.7.

* In which when we are denied we are to rest in *Gods* judgement as best for us, and so interpret the prayer answered.

§. 3. There may be a reservation in the deniall, for some greater mercy.

2. Observe, if there were not a *reservation* in that deniall, for some

ſome greater and further mercy, whereof that deniall was the foundation. Thus 1 oftentimes ſome great croſſe is prevented, by the deniall of a thing, which we were urgent for: if we had had many of our deſires, we had been undone: So it was a mercy to *David*, that his childe was taken away, for whoſe life he was yet ſo earneſt, who would have beene but a living monument of his ſhame. It was alſo a mercy to *David*, that *Abſalom* was taken away, (whom ſurely he *prayed* much for, for he loved him much) who if he had lived, might have been the ruine of him and his houſe. As a wicked mans deliverance and the granting his requeſt layeth a foundation, and is a reſervation of him to a worſe Judgement: So the deniall of a godly mans *prayer* is for his greater good, and is laid as a foundation of a greater mercy: 2 and againe, oftentimes the very deniall breakes a mans heart, and brings him neerer to God, puts him upon ſearching into his wayes, and eſtate, and in his *prayers* to ſee what ſhould be amiſſe therein, which alone is a great mercy; and better then the thing, ſeeing by the loſſe of that one thing he learnes how to *pray* better, and ſo to obtaine a hundred better things afterward. Chriſt deſired *the cup might paſſe*, it did not; and that was the foundation of our ſalvation, and the way to His glory: He being to paſſe through that ſuffering into his glory. The woman that had the bloody iſſue, though ſhe uſed many meanes, and haply *prayers* amongſt the reſt, and all in vaine, yet none tooke effect, that in the end ſhe might come to *Chriſt*, and have both body and ſoule healed at once.

§. 4. There may be a tranſmutation of the thing denyed, into ſome other bleſſing that is better of the ſame kind.

3. Obſerve that if there be not a *tranſmutation* and a *tranſlation* or turning of the thing deſired into ſome other great bleſſing of the ſame kinde: for God (*all whoſe wayes are mercy and truth to His people*) doth improve, husband, and lay out the precious ſtocks of their prayers, to the beſt advantage, in things, whereby the greateſt returnes and gaines may accrue: as old *Jacob* laid not his Hand of bleſſing as *Joſeph* would have guided them but laid the right hand upon the younger Son, whom *Joſeph* did ſet at his left: So often doth God take off his hand of bleſſing from the thing we *prayed* for, and layes and diſcovers it in another more for our good: and as God giving *Iſaac* the power and priviledge to bleſſe a ſonne, though *Iſaac* he intended it for *Eſau*,

yet God unbeknowne to him tranſmitted it to *Jacob*, yet ſo, as the bleſsing was not loſt: Thus it is in our *prayers* for a bleſſing both upon our ſelves and others. There is often a *tranſmutation*, never a *fruſtration* of them: which may as truly and directly be called an anſwer to the *prayer*; As if a Factor beyond Sea, when the owner ſends for ſuch and ſuch commodities ſuppoſing them more vendible and advantagious, but the Factor knowing the ſtate of things, and the prices, ſends him over in ſtead of them, ſuch as ſhall ſell better, and bring in more profit, may be ſaid to anſwer his letters, and that better, then if he had ſent thoſe very commodities he writ for; Thus *Abrahams prayers* for *Iſhmael* were turned for *Iſaac*: *Davids* for the Child, to *Solomon*.

§. 1. God anſwers to the ground of our prayers.

4. Obſerve if in the end God doth not anſwer thee ſtill according to the *ground* of thy prayer: that is, ſee if that holy end, intention, and affection, which thou hadſt in prayer, be not in the end fully ſatisfied, though not in the thing thou didſt deſire: for God anſwers, *Secundum cardinem*, according to the hinge which the prayer turnes upon. As when a Generall is ſent out with an Army, by a King or a State, who give him many particular directions: how to order and diſpoſe, and manage the war, although in many particulars that fall out, wherein they could not foreſee to give ſo punctuall and particular directions, he ſwerve from the directions, yet if he keeps to the intent of their Commiſsion, and doth what is moſt advantagious for their ends, he may be ſaid to keep to his Commiſsion. For as they ſay of the Law, *Mens legis eſt lex, the minde of the Law is the Law*, not the bare words it is printed in: ſo the *Meaning of the Spirit* is the prayer, *Rom.* 8. 27. and not ſimply the things deſired, wherein we expreſſe thoſe our deſires: and ſtill the meaning, the intent, the ground of our prayers ſhall be anſwered. To open this, the maine ends, and meanings of our hearts in our requeſts are Gods glory, the Churches good, and our owne particular comfort, and happineſſe: we can deſire but comfort, and a man looketh out, and ſpieth out ſuch a particular mercy, which he thinketh tends much to Gods glory, and his happineſſe, and yet that thing is denied; yet notwithſtanding God will anſwer him according to the meaning of his prayers, his glory ſhall certainely be

be advanced, even for that prayer of his, ſome other way, and his comfort made up, which is the common deſire of all mankiude: and thou canſt have but comfort, let the thing be what it will that conveighs it to thee; and God will take order that that comfort thy ſoule deſired, thou ſhalt have come in one way or other, which when it doth, thou canſt not but ſay thy prayers are heard. For as God fulfills his promiſes, ſo he heares prayers, there is the ſame reaſon of both: now God hath promiſed, *He that leaves Father and Mother, ſhall have an hundred fold*: not *in ſpecie*, as we ſay, *in kinde*, this cannot alwaies be fulfilled: for an hundred Fathers he cannot have. God fulfills it not alwayes in the ſame kinde, bnt in ſome other things, which ſhall be more then a hundred Fathers would be.

Moſes he *prayes* he might goe into *Canaan*, God anſwers the ground of his *prayer*, though not in the matter in it expreſſed and deſired, and that both for *Moſes* his comfort and his owne glory; for he takes him up to heaven, the true *Canaan*, whereof that *Canaan* was but a type, and he appoints *Joſhua* a freſh and a young man, comming on in the world, and one whom *Moſes* himſelfe had tutored and brought up, and was his pupill, ſervant and attendant, *Num.* 6. 11. 28. and this was more for Gods glory; for *Jehuah* was therein to be the type of Chriſt leading us to heaven, which the Law (of which *Moſes* was the type) could not bring us unto by *reaſon of the weakneſſe* of it; and he being young did it better: and it was not ſo much alſo for Gods glory, that one man ſhould doe all; and whereas *Moſes* deſired to have the honour of it; in that his ſervant that attended him, and had beene brought up by him, and had all from him, that he was the man ſhould doe it, was well-nigh as great an honour to *Moſes*, as if he had beene the leader himſelfe. And ſo *David* when he deſired to build the Temple and an houſe to God, for the like reaſons God denied it, but yet honoured him to prepare the materialls, and to draw the patterne, as alſo in that his Sonne did it, who was therein alſo the like type of Chriſt, being a *Prince of peace*, but *David* a man of blood and warre, and likewiſe God accepted this of *David*, as if he had built it, and will recompence him as much.

§. 7. God when he denies, yet ſometimes yeelds far in it to give ſatisfaction to his childe.

5. Obſerve, if in the thing which thou haſt prayed much a-

bout, though it be denied thee, yet if God doth not endeavour to give thee (as I may ſo ſpeake) all ſatisfaction that may be, even as if he were tender of denying thee; and therefore doth much in it for thy prayers ſake, though the concluſion proves otherwiſe, as being againſt ſome other purpoſe of his, for ſome other ends: as when he denied *Moſes* to goe into the Land of *Canaan*, he did it with much reſpect (as I may ſo ſpeake with reverence) to *Moſes*: he yeelded as far as might be, for he let him leade them, till he ſhould come to the very borders; and he let him ſee that good Land, carrying him up to an hill, and (as it is thought) by a miracle inabled his ſight to view the whole Land; and the man he choſe to performe this worke, was his ſervant, which was a great honour to *Moſes*; that one brought up by him ſhould ſucceed him. So when *Abraham* prayed for *Iſhmael, O let Iſhmael live in thy ſight*, *Gen.* 17. 18. God went as far in granting his requeſt as might be: for, ſayes he, ver. 20. *I have heard thee, and I have bleſſed him, and I will make him fruitfull, and multiply him exceedingly, and he ſhall beget twelve Princes; but my covenant I will eſtabliſh with Iſaac.* So likewiſe, when in caſting that thing, thou didſt ſeeke at his hands, he ſhews an extraordinary hand in turning it; it is a ſigne he had a reſpect to thee, that he would vouchſafe to diſcover his hand ſo much in it; let the thing fall which way it will, if Gods hand appeare much in it, thou mayeſt comfortably conclude, that there is ſome great thing in it, and that prayer wrought that miracle in it, to diſpoſe it ſo; and that there is ſome great reaſon why he denies thee, and a great reſpect had to thy prayers, in that he is pleaſed to diſcover ſo extraordinary a providence about it.

§. 7. Obſerve the effects that denyals have upon the heart: As firſt, if a man doth acknowledge God righteous in it, &c.

Laſtly, looke into the effect of that deniall upon thine owne heart; as,

1. If thy heart be inlarged to acknowledge God to be holy and righteous in his dealings with thee, and thine owne unworthineſſe the cauſe of his denying thee. Thus we often finde the Saints expreſſing themſelves in their prayers: that *Pſal.* 22. though typically made of Chriſt; yet as it was penned by *David*, and as it may concerne his perſon, it may ſerve for an inſtance for this, *I cry in the day time, but thou heareſt not*: this might have

have made him jealous of God; but sayes he, *Thou art holy, &c.* and dealest now with me in an holy manner, and art just in it: *Others have called thee*, and have beene heard, though I now for my unworthinesse am denied: *But I am a worme.* It might have put a man off, when he should think others are heard, but not I, but it puts not him off, but humbles him, *I am a worme, &c.* And *Thou art holy.*

2. If God fill thy heart with an holy contentment in the deniall; if he speake to thy heart, as he did to *Moses*, when he denied him, *Deut.* 3. *Let it suffice thee*; if as to Saint *Paul*, when he was so earnest about removing that buffeting, if thou gettest but such an answer as that to him, *My grace is sufficient*; or that some such like consideration is dropt in that stayes thee: it was the effect of *Davids* seven dayes fasting, that he did so contentedly beare the losse of the Childe, which his servants thought would have overwhelmed him, 2 *Sam.* 12.19, 20,21. But a consideration was dropt in which was the fruit of his prayer, *That he should goe to him, not he returne hither*; and his minde was comforted thereby, in so much, as it is said, *ver.* 24. *that he comforted Bathsheba also.*

2. If God fill the heart with a holy contentment in the denyall.

3. If thou canst be thankfull to God, out of faith, that God hath cast and ordered all for the best, though he hath denied thee; and although thou seest no reason, but that the thing prayed for, would have beene for the best, yet art thankfull upon the deniall of it, out of faith resting in Gods judgement in it: as *David*, in all those forementioned places was, *Thou art holy, that inhabitest the praises of Israel*; he praises God for all this: *David* before he did eate, after his seven dayes fasting for the childe, arose, *And went first into the Temple and worshipped*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 20. and of what kind of worship it was, appeares by his annointing himselfe and *changing his rayment*, which was in token of rejoycing and thanksgiving, and it fell out to him according to his faith, for presently after, *Solomon* was begotten, *ver.* 24.

3. If the heart be thankful out of faith, when denyed.

§. 4.

4. If thou canst pray still and givest not over, although thou standest for mercies which thou missest; if when thou hast mercies granted, thou fearest most, and when denyed lovest most, and art not discouraged, thy prayers are heard, *Psal.* 80. 4. Though God seemed angry with their prayers, yet they pray and expostulate

If the heart be not discouraged, for continuing still to pray for other things.

poſtulate with him, and give not over, for they made that Pſalm as a prayer, *And how long wilt thou be angry againſt the prayer of thy people?* So Pſal. 44. 17. *Though we are caſt among Dragons, yet we have not been falſe in thy Covenant.* So ſay thou, I will pray ſtill, though I never have an anſwer in this life. It moves ingenuous natures to ſee men take repulſes and denialls well, which proud perſons will not doe: and ſo it moves God.

CHAP. X.

Application: *A* reproofe *of thoſe that pray, but looke not after the Returne of their prayers: The* cauſes *of this neglect.*

A reproofe of thoſe that pray, but looke not after the returne of their prayers.

THE Uſe of all is, to reprove thoſe, who put up prayers, and are earneſt in begging, but looke not after them when they have done, no more then if they had not prayed: who ſtill venture and have a great ſtocke of prayers going, but looke not after the returnes that are made, caſt not up their commings in, and gainings by prayers; and when they have prayed, ſit downe diſcouraged; as not making account in earneſt, that ever they ſhall heare of their prayers againe, even as if they had beene but as words caſt away: *as beating the ayr*; *as bread caſt upon the waters*, which they thinke ſinkes or is carried away, and they ſhall find it no more: but herein you deſpiſe Gods Ordinance, and *erre, not knowing the power of the prayers*; and ye contemne the Lord. But you will ſay as they in the Prophet ſaid, *Wherein do We contemne him?* if you askt a man a queſtion, and when you had done, did turne your back upon him, as ſcoffing *Pilate* askt in ſcorne of Chriſt, *What is truth?* but would not ſtay for an anſwer, did you not contemne him? as not to anſwer when a queſtion is asked you, is contempt, ſo not to regard the anſwer made, when you have beene earneſt in begging, is no leſſe contempt alſo: if you had writ letters to a very friend about important buſineſſe, and had earneſtly ſollicited him for an anſwer, and he were carefull in due time to ſend one, if you ſhould make account to heare of him no more, ſhould you not wrong him in your thoughts; Or if he did write, if you ſhould not vouchſafe to reade over his anſwer, were it not a contempt

tempt of him? ſo is it here, when you have beene earneſt with God for bleſſings and regard not the anſwer: and becauſe verily this is a fault among us, I will therefore endeavour to diſcover to you the cauſes and diſcouragements, which though they keepe you not from praying, yet from this earneſt expectation, and reall, and true making account to heare of anſwers of your prayers; onely my ſcope is, not to ſhew you ſo much the reaſons, why God denies you many requeſts, as why even in your owne hearts you are diſcouraged after you have prayed, as if they would not be anſwered, although God doth anſwer them. Theſe diſcouragements are partly *temptations*, partly *ſinfull impediments* wherein we are more faulty.

The cauſes of this neglect, are of two ſorts.

1. Becauſe your aſſurance that your perſons are accepted, is weake, therefore your confidence that your prayers are heard, is weake alſo: For as God doth firſt accept the perſon, and then our prayers: ſo the beleefe, that God doth accept our perſons, is that which alſo upholds our hearts in confidence that our prayers ſhall be granted; this you may finde in 1 *John* 5.13,14,15. in the 13. *ver.* he ſayes, *Theſe things have I written to you, that ye may know you have eternall life:* and upon that aſſurance this will follow, *ver.* 14. 15. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we aske any thing according to his will, he heares us &c. And if we know he heares us, we know we have the petitions we deſired of him.* Marke how he linkes theſe three together, as effects and conſequences each of other. 1. *Theſe things I write unto you, that you may be aſſured*, that life and heaven is yours, as in 12. and 13. *verſes*. And upon that 2. this confidence will follow in your hearts, *That God hears you*, that is, that you have his eares open to you, and his heart enlarged towards you: and the 3. if you be aſſured that God heares you, then from this will follow an aſſurance, that *You ſhall have any thing granted*, you deſire; yea, and he makes this one of the maine and immediate effects of Aſſurance of juſtification; therefore he ſaies, *This is the confidence* that we have in him; that is, this effect there is of this confidence, for whereas they might ſay, what benefit will accrue to us by this aſſurance? why this ſaies he, which is one of the great and maine priviledges of a Chriſtian, even aſſurance that God will heare him; and not onely ſo, but grant him all his prayers. For

1. Temptations, want of aſſurance; as 1. That becauſe your perſons are not accepted, your prayers are not.

when

when a man is assured God hath given him his Son, he will then easily be induced to beleeve and expect, *How shall he not with him give me all things? Rom.* 8. 32. If once he looks upon God as a Father, he will then easily conceive that which Christ sayes; *If Fathers that are evill can give good things to their Children, how much more shall not your Father give his Spirit, and all good things to them that aske them?* and if he gave his Son, when we did not pray to him, how much more shall he not with him give us all things we pray for? If a man comes to sue to any man whose minde he knew not, whether he loved him or not, he would have small hope or expectation of having his suit granted, though he came againe and againe; but if he be assured he is in favour with him, according to that degree of favour he supposed himselfe to stand in with him, he is assured and confident of obtaining his request.

2. Of the weakenesse of our prayers: which is answered by 3. things.

2. Discouragement is the weakenesse of their prayers: though a man thinkes his person is accepted, yet alas, sayes he, my prayers are so poore and weake as surely God will never regard them. To remove which, let me first aske thee this question: Doest thou pray with all thy might? then though *that thy might* be weake in it selfe, and in thine owne apprehension such, yet because it is all the might which thou hast, and which grace hath in thee, it shall be accepted. *For God accepts according to what a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* 2 *Cor.* 8. 12.

1.

2. Thou art to consider that God doth not heare thee for thy prayers sake, though not without them, but *for his Names sake*, and his *Sons sake*, and because thou art his childe, as the mother when her childe cryes, (suppose it to be a weake childe) doth not neglect to heare and relieve it, but tenders it; not because it doth cry more lowd, but because it cries, and pities it the more weaker it is.

2.

3. Againe though the performance in it selfe be weake, yet considered as a prayer, it may be strong, because a weake prayer may set the strong God aworke; as faith for the act of it, as produced by us, may be weake, yet because its object is Christ, therefore it justifies: So it is in prayer, it prevailes, not because of the performance it selfe, but because of the name, which it is put up in, even Christs name; and therefore as a weake faith

3.

justifies,

juſtifies, ſo a weake prayer prevailes as well as a ſtronger; and both for the like reaſon in both, for faith attributes all to God, and ſo doth prayer; for as faith is meerely a receiving grace, ſo prayer a begging grace. And therefore doeſt thou think thy prayers are accepted at all, notwithſtanding thy weakneſſe? if that they are accepted, then they muſt be accepted as prayers; now if they be accepted as prayers, then as effectuall motives to prevaile with God to grant the thing you aske; for if he ſhould not accept them to that end, for which they were ordained, it is as if he accepted them not at all. As therefore when he approves of any mans faith as true and ſincere, he approves and accepts of it to that purpoſe, for which it was ordained, which is to ſave and juſtifie, and to this end doth as fully accept the weakeſt act of faith, as the ſtrongeſt; ſo is it with their prayers, which being ordained as a meanes to obtaine mercies from him, if he accepts them at all, it is with relation to the accompliſhment of them, which is their end.

4. Men are miſtaken in judging of the weakneſſe of their prayers, they judge of the weakneſſe of their prayers by their expreſſions, and gifts in performing them, or by the ſtirring and overflow of affections, whereas the ſtrength and vigor of prayer ſhould be eſtimated from the faith, the ſincerity, the obedience, the deſires expreſt in it. As it is not the lowdneſſe of a Preachers voice, but the weight and holineſſe of the matter, and ſpirit of the Preacher, that moves a wiſe, and an intelligent hearer: ſo not gifts, but graces in prayers are they that move the Lord. The ſtrength of prayers lies not in words, but in that it is fitted to prevaile with God; one prayer is not more ſtrong then another, further then it is ſo framed as it hath power with God more or leſſe; as of *Jacob* it is ſaid, *he had power with God*, *Hoſ.* 12. Now prayers move God, not as an Oratour moves his hearers, but as a childe moves his Father: two words of a childe humbled, and crying at his fathers feet, will prevaile more then penned orations. *Rom.* 8. It is *the meaning of the Spirit*, that God looks unto, more then the expreſſions: for the *groans* there are ſaid to be *unutterable*. *Hezekiahs* expreſſions were ſo rude and broken, that he ſayes, *Eſay* 38. 14. that he did but *chatter*, (he being then ſick) even *as a crane*, yet God heard them.

3. So often failings of answers: answered by foure things.

A third discouragement is failings of answers; I have prayed often and long, and I have beene seldome or never answered, and therefore I make little account of my prayers, that they are heard: others have the revenues of their prayers comming in, but I doe misse whatsoever almost I stand for: Therefore say they as those, *Why have we fasted and thou regardest it not? Esay* 58.3.

1. To remove this, consider 1. That thou hast the more reason to wait, for thou hast the more answers to come: for as wicked men *treasure up wrath*, so doe godly men mercy, and especially by their prayers; and therefore mercies, and answers doe often come thick together, even as afflictions also doe.

2. Suppose thou shouldst have few answers concerning the things thou seekest for here, either in praying for thy selfe or others, yet *thy reward is with the Lord.* It is in praying as in preaching, a man may preach faithfully many a yeare, and yet not convert a soule, and yet a man is not to give over waiting, but to observe after every Sermon what good is done, and whether God will give them repentance, as it is 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. And if none be converted, yet as *Esay* 49. 4. *A mans reward is with the Lord, Every man shall receive his owne reward according to his owne labour*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 8. and not according to the successe of his labour onely. So it is in praying, though thou missest againe and againe, and nothing succeeds thou prayest for, yet be not discouraged, for thy reward is with the Lord, which will come in one day.

3. 3. GOD doth it not that he heares thee not, but to try thee: for a man to say as *David* sayes, *Psal.* 116. 1, 2. *God hath heard my prayer, therefore I will call upon him as long as I live*, that is nothing so much as to be able to say, Well, I have prayed thus long, and for these many things, and never sped, and *yet I will call upon him whilest I live*, though I finde no answer in this life. To find commings in, in a trade, and yet to hold out trading still, argues not so much faithfulnesse in a mans calling, as when a man hath losses and castings behinde hand, and yet to follow it.

4. 4. God usually stayes so long that we have done expecting, *Luke* 18. 8. *The Elect cry day and night*, but *God stayes* so long, *v.*7. that when he comes *he finds not faith*, they have done expecting,

ing, have forgot their prayers, and then *he doth things they looked not for.* Esay 64.

§ 2.

Other discouragements there are wherein we our selves are more faulty, and which are our sinnes, more then our temptations, which yet weaken the expectation of having our prayers answered: as, A 2. cause are sinfull discouragements, which are three

1. Slothfulnesse in prayer, when we doe not put to all our might in praying, and then no wonder, we doe not onely not obtaine, but that our owne hearts misgive us, that we looke for little successe and issue of such prayers, *Qui frigide rogat, docet negare*; he that shews himselfe cold in a suit, teaches him he sues to, to deny him; if we see one seeking to us faintly, and sleightly, we are not then sollicitous to deny him, but thinke he will be easily put off, and not thinke much; so accordingly when we shall observe so much by our selves, and see our selves slothfull in praying, and praying *as if we prayed not*, no wonder if by reason of that consciousnesse, wee looke not after the successe of such prayers, which in the performance wee sleighted; when we pray, as if we were willing to be denyed, we knowing that the Scripture sayes, that *the fervent prayer* onely *prevailes*, that prayer which is ἐνεργουμένη, that sets all the faculties on worke, *James* 5. 16. How should wee then expect that God should grant any good thing to us? For though God sels nothing to us for our prayers, but gives freely, yet he would have his gifts accepted: now without large desires, and longings they would not be accepted: and what is fervent prayer, but the expression of such fervent desire? *Jacob wrestled* when he obtained; *many seeke to enter*, sayes Christ, *but you must strive*. Now when wee know these things, and yet are slothfull, how can we expect any answer at all? will not the consciousnesse of it quell all our expectations? and hence it comes to passe that God proportioning his dealings with us to our prayers, because we seeme to pray, and yet pray not to purpose, therefore God he sometimes seemes like one a sleepe, and then sometimes to wake, and make faire offers to helpe, and yet falls as it were asleepe againe, because we were thus drowsie in our prayers; those prayers that awaken God, must awaken us: Those prayers that stir God, must first *stir us to lay hold on God*, as *Esaiah* speaks: as obedience

1. Slothfulnesse in prayer.

ſtrengthens *faith* and aſſurance, ſo fervency in prayer begets confidence of being heard. In all other things ſlothfulneſſe doth diſcourage and weaken expectation: doth any man expect that riches ſhould come upon him, when he doth his buſineſſe negligently? *for it is the diligent hand that maketh rich*: doth any man expect a crop and a harveſt, if he takes not paines to plow, and ſow his corne? no more if you doe not take paines with your hearts in Prayer, can you expect an anſwer, or indeed will you.

2 Diſcouragement: looking at prayer as a duty, rather then as a means to obtaine bleſſings.

2. Cauſe: or ſinfull diſcouragement herein: is looking at *prayer* onely as a duty to be performed, and ſo performing it as a taske, and not ſo much out of deſires ſtirred up after the things to be obtained, nor out of faith that we ſhall obtaine them; which is as if a Phyſitian having a ſick ſervant, to whom he preſcribeth, and commandeth to take ſome phyſick to cure him, and his man ſhould take it indeed becauſe it is commanded and preſcribed by his maſter, looking at it as an act of duty as he obeyes him in other buſineſſes, but not as looking at it as a medicine, or meanes, that will have any worke upon him to cure him, and therefore orders himſelfe as if he had taken no ſuch thing. Thus doe moſt in the world *pray* to God, take *prayer* as a *preſcription* onely, but not as a *meanes*: they come to God daily, but as to a *Maſter* onely in this performance, not as a *Father*, and thus doing, no wonder if they looke for little effect of *prayers*: for our expectation never exceeds or reaches further then our end and intention, which we had in any buſineſſe. If I performe any Ordinance but as a duty, then I reſt therein, and expect no further: as if a man preacheth for *filthy lucre* onely, he performes his duty, and then looks for his hire, but lookes not after any other effect of his Sermons: ſo nor will men doe after their *prayers* for anſwers to them when they performe them as duties onely. Now to help you in this, you are to looke to two things in *prayer*. Firſt to a *command from God*. Secondly, to the *promiſes of God*: and ſo to conſider it in a double relation, firſt as a *duty* in reſpect to the *command*, ſecondly, as a *means* to obtaine or procure bleſſings at Gods hand in relation to his *promiſes*: therefore in *prayer*, firſt *an act of obedience*, ſecondly, an act of *faith* is to be exerciſed, *Aske in faith nothing wavering*,

A direction. 2. Things to be lookt at in praying; A command; A promiſe.

Jam.

Jam. 1. Now the moſt in the world performe it as an act of obedience onely, and ſo reſt in the preſent performance and acceptation of it, but if a man *pray* in *faith*, he will *pray* with an eye to the promiſes; and looke on *prayer* as a meanes for time to come to obtaine ſuch or ſuch a mercy at Gods hands; and if ſo, then he is not ſatisfied till he hath an anſwer of his *prayers*, and till then will waite, as the *Church* ſayes, *She would waite till he did ariſe and plead her cauſe.*

A third ſinfull diſcouragement is returning to ſinnes after *prayers*, when a man hath prayed for ſome mercy, and riſeth full of much confidence that his *prayers* are heard, and ſo a while he walkes, yet falling into a ſinne, *that* ſinne doth daſh all his hopes, undoes his *prayers* (as he thinkes) and calls them backe againe, meets as it were with the anſwer, which is Gods meſſenger, and cauſeth it to returne to heaven againe. How often when God had even granted a petition, and the Decree was a comming forth, and the grant newly written, and the ſeale a ſetting to it, but an act of Treaſon comming betweene, ſtops it in the ſeale, and defers it, blots and blurreth all, both prayer and grant when newly written, and leaves a guilt in the minde, which quells our hopes, and then we looke no more after our *prayers*; and this eſpecially if when we were a ſinning, ſuch a thought came in, (as often it doth to reſtraine us) are you not in dependance upon God for ſuch a mercy, and have prayed for it, and are faire for it, how then dare you doe this, and ſinne againſt him? when in this caſe the heart goes on, and blots all the *prayer*, and diſcourageth a man; for ſaith the conſcience, Will God heare *ſinners?* (as he ſaid.) And thus farre it is true that *ſinning* thus betweene, interrupts and hinders the obtaining our petitions, that anſwerably as we doe thus daſh and betray and undoe our *prayers*, ſo in a proportion, we finde in the way to our obtaining the thing wee *prayed* for, ſo many rubbes and difficulties doe ariſe; for as wee lay blocks in Gods way comming towards us to doe us good, ſo he in ours: therefore often when a buſineſſe goes proſperouſly on, and wee thinke wee ſhall carry it, comes ſome accident betweene the cup and the lip, that caſts all behinde hand againe, becauſe anſwerably wee dealt with God. For when

3. Diſcouragement 3 falling into ſinnes againe after praying.

The anſwer of it.

we had *prayed*, and were encouraged and in good hopes, then by ſome *ſinne* or other we ſpoiled all, and bereaved our ſelves of our expectation. But yet this you are to conſider, that as in the end *praying* uſeth to overcome *ſinne* in Gods Children, ſo alſo God in the end overcomes difficulties, and brings the matter to paſſe: and know it is not *ſinnes* paſt ſo much that hinder the prayers of Gods people, as the preſent unfitneſſe and indiſpoſition of their hearts for mercy.

101

TIDINGS

TIDINGS OF *PEACE* TO BE SPOKEN TO Conſciences diſtreſſed.

PSAL. 85. ver. 8.

——God will ſpeake peace unto his people, and to his Saints, &c.——

THe maine thing intended to be inſiſted upon out of theſe words is diſpatcht, yet that I may not leave ſo faire and fruitfull a crop ſtill ſtanding upon the ground unreaped, I will goe on more briefly to have in the reſt of that Harveſt the Text affords.

This *Pſalme* (as was ſaid) was penned as a Prophecy of and *prayer* for the returne of Gods people out of the captivity of *Babylon*, and the ſetling and eſtabliſhment of that Church and State upon its former Baſis, yet ſo as therein there is a further and more eſpecial aime had to the peace and glory to be brought in by Chriſt, till when this Prophecy otherwiſe had but a poore and ſlender accompliſhment, in regard of much outward glory or peace that that Church enjoyed.

And therefore the peace here ſpoken of and promiſed for the preſent is to be extended largelier then to outward proſperity, or an happy iſſue out of that calamity, even to ſpeaking peace to drooping and weather-beaten conſciences: and accordingly we find this kind of peace to have been eſpecially promiſed by the Prophet *Iſaiah* to the people at their returne out of the Captivity,

Captivity, both in *Isa.* 48. from 20. to the end, and *Isa.* 57. from the 14. to the end, there being many broken hearts that had wanted the light of Gods countenance long, having been during the Captivity, baniſht from the Ordinances of the Temple, hanging up their *harps* mourning, whoſe *thoughts* were as if God had meant to *deſtroy them*, as appeares *Jer.* 29. 11. who afterwards were refreſhed with inward *peace*, at the reſtauration of thoſe Ordinances, as well as with outward, as by thoſe places doth appeare. Therefore in relation to this kinde of peace onely I will at this time handle the words.

In the words you have a diſcovery of Gods proceedings in treating of peace, or proclaiming war, with his people and ſubjects.

Obſer. 1. 1 You ſee *that ſometimes God doth not ſpeake peace to his owne children.* This was their ſtate for the preſent, when this *Pſalme* was penned: *He will ſpeake peace*, therefore at preſent he did not; yea, it may incline us to thinke that God at preſent ſpake the contrary, for the Prophet ſpeakes this by *faith*, as contrary to ſenſe, and preſent experience; he beleeves God intends to come againe to a treaty of peace, though now he ſeemes to have nothing but anger, and blood, and war in his looks, ſpeeches, and actions; and to threaten and proclaime warre, and take up Armes againſt them. And thus God often deales with his owne Children, whether a people or a particular man: ſo with a nation, *Eſay* 63. 10. *They rebelled, and he fought againſt them:* ſo with a particular man, God frowned upon and rated his Childe *Ephraim, and ſpake bitter things againſt him*, (it is the phraſe uſed, *Jer.* (31.20.) though yet *Ephraim is my pleaſant Child*, ſayes he:) *David* had not a good word from him a long time, *Pſal.* 51. 8. *Make me to heare againe of joy and gladneſſe.* And *Pſal.* 50. 7. *Heare oh my people, and I will ſpeake*, but not againſt them they might hope, becauſe he ownes them for his people: *Heare oh Iſrael, and I will teſtifie againſt thee:* and yet it followes, *I am the Lord thy God.* *Job* ſayes, he did not ſpeake onely againſt him, but alſo *wrote bitter things*, he wrought as it were books againſt him, *Job* 13.26. he writing over in his Conſcience *the ſinnes of his youth* in letters of blood, and wrath, and terrors for them.

Obſer. 2. There muſt needs be ſome great reaſon for this, *they being his people,*

people, which is the ſecond thing that is intimated, and may be obſerved out of theſe words, namely, the reaſon or moving cauſe provoking God thus to interrupt the peace of his people; they had fallen into ſome groſſe *folly* or other, ſome ſinfull inordinate diſpoſitious had beene indulged unto, and nouriſhed in them, which is uſually, though not alwayes, the cauſe of this his dealing: this is evident by this, that the concluſion of their peace, when it is made up againe, hath this clauſe, as the onely article of reconciliation betweene them, that *they returne no more to folly*, implying they had formerly runne out into ſome inordinacy, which to reduce them from, God had tooke up armes againſt them, and thereby taught them wiſdome to take heed of loſing, and then buying peace at ſo deare a rate againe. And indeed all the quarrells, that God hath againſt a Nation, a particular place, or perſon, that belongs to him, doe begin there; *They rebelled*, and He *fought againſt them*, Eſay 63. 8. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſſe I was wroth*, Eſay 57.

The reaſon is, for anger is out of love as well as hatred, which therefore he expreſſeth though with griefe, he ſhould be put to quarrell with thoſe, he hath ſet himſelfe to love. And as wicked men, whom hee alwaies hates, may out of his patience have a truce; ſo on the contrary, with his owne, God may take up a quarrell, yet He loves them, and remembers them, with everlaſting kindneſſe. *Reaſon.*

The *Uſes* of both are theſe.

1. As peace with God is deare to you, ſo to take heed of turning unto folly; Onely take this advertiſement, that they are not meere follies or ignorances that doe interrupt, or breake the peace: as it is not ſimply the outrage of ſome Pirats that will cauſe two States at peace to enter into a warre, unleſſe that State conſent to their act, and maintaine them in their rapine. So it is not ſimply the riſing of luſts that *warre in our members againſt the law of the minde*, that breake the peace betweene God and us, unleſſe they be approved of, and conſented unto, nouriſhed and maintained with ſome preſumption; whileſt we maintaine, and take up a conſtant fight againſt Gods enemies in us, and diſavow the outragious riſings of our luſts, the peace may hold, and often doth; for whileſt we are not at peace with ſinne, God may be *Uſe* 1.

at peace with us and our ſpirits; but ſo much peace as we give them, ſo much war God takes up.

Uſe 2. The ſecond *Uſe* is: Doth God take up quarrells againſt His owne? then upon any breach made, goe forth to meet Him: It is Saint *Pauls* exhortation, not *to let the Sunne goe downe upon thy wrath*, but to reconcile thy ſelfe ere night, with thy offended brother; but I turne the exhortation, *Let not the Sunne goe downe upon Gods wrath* towards thee; but every day make and renew thy peace with God, ere thou ſleepeſt, that as *David* ſayes, *thou maieſt lie downe and ſleep in peace*, *Pſal.* 4. 8.

Uſe 3. The third *Uſe*: If the peace of Gods owne people be thus often interrupted, who yet are *the Sons of peace*, *Luke* 10. what wrath is reſerved for the *children of diſobedience*, and open Rebells? that are *children of wrath*, becauſe *of diſobedience*? *There is no peace to the wicked, ſayes my God*, Eſay 57. God is *a preparing againſt thee*, who ever thou art, that goeſt on in *ſinne, if thou turne not*, Pſal. 7. 13. thou art preſt for hell, and art thither bound, to encounter with the wrath of the great God, thither where no truce is to be had, *there is no diſcharge in that warre*, as *Solomon* ſayes, *Eccleſ.* 8. 8. Thinke of this, you that *ſinne*, and will *ſinne*; whoſe peace is not ſtruck up between God & you, who never yet ſo much as entered into any treaty of peace with God, who never apprehended God and your ſelves at oddes.

Ephcſ. 2. 2.

Obſer. 1. The third thing to be obſerved out of the Text is this; *That when the Child of God wants peace, he can have no peace till God ſpeake it*; God muſt ſpeake peace, if ever his people have it: therefore ſayes he here, *I will heare what God will ſpeake*: he ſpeakes in oppoſition to the voice of man, and the helpe of ſecond cauſes, and of all meanes whatever, which in time of diſtreſſe, of themſelves can doe no good.

Reaſon 1. Reaſon firſt: Becauſe *God* is the *King of all* the world, the Soveraigne Lord of all. Now treaties of warre and peace are the prerogative of Kings, and of them alone: they may conſult with their ſubjects about eſtabliſhing good Lawes, as they uſe to doe, &c. but the proclaiming Warre and Peace with forraine States, they have ever held in their owne hands; and ſo doth God who is the King of Kings.

Reaſon. 2. Secondly, becauſe God is the Judge of all the world, and the party

party offended, at whoſe ſuite all arreſts and controverſies doe come; now when a coudemned man ſtands at the barre, let all the ſtanders by ſay what they will, bid him be of good comfort, and tell him that his cauſe will goe well, yet till he heare the Judge himſelfe ſpeake as much, he cannot be at reſt in his minde: the Judge onely can acquit him and abſolve him. The King alone ſpeaks pardons; and ſo doth God peace; all afflictions are his arreſts; thou muſt therefore make thy peace with him, if thou wilt be at peace.

Thirdly, peace, eſpecially of conſcience, is a thing muſt be *created*, for our hearts of themſelves are full of nothing but turmoile; as the *raging Sea*, which *cannot reſt. I create the fruit of the lips, peace, Iſaiah* 57. 19. men may ſpeake it, but I muſt create it; A word of power, ſuch as went forth when light was created, muſt goe forth from God, or elſe there is no peace; for otherwiſe our hearts are as the ſea, that reſts not. *Reaſon* 3.

Fourthly, the wounds of conſcience which are in Gods people, are of that quallity, that none but God can cure them; for, the chiefe thing that wounds them, is the loſſe of *Gods* favour, not ſimply his wrath: for it is the glory of God, and his favour, not ſelfe-love onely that makes them ſeeke him; therefore nothing gives peace, but the reſtoring of his favour, and the light of his countenance; the ſame dart that wounded, muſt heale againe; *Iſay* 57. *I ſmote him, and I will heale him*; And as one that is ſick with love, when love is the diſeaſe, no phyſick, no perſwaſion of friends can cure it, nothing but onely the love of the party beloved; ſo when a ſoule is wounded for the loſſe of Gods love, not all the things in the world can cure the heart, but one word from him, one good looke, one promiſe from him that we are his, ſtills all, and onely can give peace. Like to a poore childe, that cries for its mother, let who will dandle it, and play with it, and uſe it never ſo kindly, yet it will not be ſtilled till the mother comes; ſo it is with a poore ſoule that cryes after God day and night. *Reaſon* 4.

1. *Uſe.* In caſe thou art in diſtreſſe, eſpecially of ſpirit, and want of peace of Conſcience, waite upon God, in the uſe of meanes for peace; friends may come to thee, and ſay, Why ſhouldeſt thou be troubled? thou haſt no ſuch cauſe to be caſt down? *Uſe.* 1.

down; but all these are *miserable comforters*, (as *Job* said) unlesse God speake peace: *David* heard by the Prophet *Nathan* that his sinne was pardoned, but yet his soule was not at quiet, till God would second it immediately by his Spirit; therefore saies he when *Nathan* had beene with him, *Psal.* 51. 8. *Make me to heare of joy and gladnesse.* Art thou baited with hellish blasphemies cast into thy soule? God must speake peace, and rebuke Satan for thee, and take him off thee; all thy friends, all the men in the world cannot doe it; they can onely say as the Arch-angel said, *The Lord rebuke thee.* And he can as easily doe it, as he did rebuke *Laban*, and forbade him speaking roughly to *Jacob*, the same charge he can give in an instant to Satan: therefore wait upon God, and looke up to him.

Use 2. 2. Consider this against the time you come to die; all your desire is to die in peace, and, *Oh let thy servant depart in peace!* is the speech and desire of all; But who is it, that must speake peace to you then? God onely. At death you will send for a good Minister, or a good friend, to give you some comfort, (as you call it) but, if God will not speake it, how can they? If you could call all the Angels out of Heaven, and all the Saints both in Earth, and Heaven; and so could have all that whole Colledge of Physicians about you, and they should desire to comfort you with all their cordials; yet if God will not speake it, who is able to doe it? *Job* 34. 29. *If he hides his face, who can behold him?* None can shew his face, as the opposition in the next words shewes. False daubers may come to you, and say, *Peace, peace*, as they in the Prophet said; but listen what God will speake, he onely must, and can doe it; and be sure you make sure of him before you come to die. Would any wise Prince defer the treaty of peace with his enemy, till he come into the field, and when the battell is begun? how foolish then are those, who neglect seeking after God, till the assault of death comes, and the *King of feares* with all his terrours, hath encompassed them round?

Obser. 4. 4. *Observation* is, that let Gods people be in never so great distresse, yet *it is an easie thing for God to give peace* to them; marke the expression used here, It is but *speaking peace*, that is, it is as *easie* for him to give peace, as it is for you to *speake a word*;

word; it is no more to him: Then, our comfort is, that as he only muſt doe it; ſo he eaſily can doe it, even with word.

Reaſon 1. Becauſe his ſpeaking is *creating*: if he ſpeakes, he makes things to be, even with a word; as at firſt, he did but ſay, *Let there be light, and there was light*; ſo ſtill, if hee but ſay, *Let there be peace*, there *is peace*: *he made all, and upholds all by the word of his power*. As therefore when the ſtorme was at its height, and the waves moſt raging, yet at one word of *Chriſts* they were all ſtill: *The Sea and the winds obey him*: ſo when tentations are moſt fierce, and the doubts of thine owne heart moſt tumultuous, and raging, a word from him can ſtill them. *Reaſon* 1.

Secondly, becauſe the light, which God gives to a mans ſpirit, when he ſpeaks peace, is a ſure and infallible light, and therefore a ſatisfying light; ſo as when it comes it muſt needs give peace; and no objection, no tentation can darken or obſcure it, when it ſhines: *If he give quietneſſe, who can trouble?* ſayes he in *Job* 34. 29. No creature is able to ſeparate from his love, or the aſſurance of it.

1. It is a certaine and infallible light, which God gives, when he ſpeakes peace; The *anointing from above*, which enlighteneth a mans eyes, *is truth, and is no lie*, 1 *John* 2. 27. that is in *teaching a man* (of which he there ſpeakes, not onely what he is in himſelfe, but what he is in teaching us) he doth it ſo, as a man is not deluded by it, and therefore it is added, *None elſe need teach* him; for did the Spirit (when he did ſpeake peace) ſpeake ſo, as that that man to whom it is ſpoken, did not infallibly apprehend it, he ſhould ſpeake in vaine: for ſo the Apoſtle reaſons in caſe of *unknowne tongues*, that if a *Trumpet* give *an uncertaine ſound*; or a man ſpeakes ſo as it ſhall not be knowne what hee ſpeaks, *he beats the aire*: 1 *Cor.* 14. 9. Now therefore ſurely God, when he ſpeaks peace, ſpeakes it ſo infallibly, and diſtinctly, that the ſoule knows the meaning of it; It is not a voice elſe, for, ſayes the Apoſtle there, *ver.* 10. The *end of all voices is to ſignifie*, and therefore *if I know not the meaning of the voice, he ſhall be as a Barbarian, that ſpeaks to me*: *ver.* 11. eſpecially when the ſpeaker undertakes to be a *witneſſe*, as the Holy Ghoſt in ſpeaking peace is, 1 *John* 5. 6. Now to *witneſſe*, is ſuch a teſtimony,

as is taken for infallible, for the end of it is to put an *end to the controverſie*, and it ends the ſtrife betweene man and man; now the Holy Ghoſt when he ſpeakes, ſpeakes as a *witneſſe*, and therefore puts an end to a mans doubts: he ſpeakes infallibly.

And therefore in the ſecond place, it is a ſatisfying light alſo; it is ſuch a light as diſpells darkeneſſe, and anſwers all objections; and ſo ſpeakes peace home. As in a queſtion, and controvrrſie in Divinity, or Logick, when ſome one bottome truth is underſtood, a man hath a light, which goes through all the Objections, and anſwers them all; ſuch a light doth the Spirit give to a poore diſtreſſed ſoule, about the great controverſie of his owne ſalvation, when he doth ſpeake peace; he gives ſuch a light, as ſatisfies the minde, as lets him ſee that in Gods free grace, and in Chriſts, which doth anſwer to all, he, or all the devils can ſay againſt him, from what wants, or objections are in himſelfe. *He openeth*, and *no man*, nor devill, *is able to ſhut*: And therefore when he doth ſpeake peace, his teſtimony is taken and beleeved: If we *receive the witneſſe of men*, and reſt in it, 1 *John* 5. 9. *the witneſſe of God is greater*, that is, of more power, and efficacy to perſwade, and ſatisfie the ſoule.

Uſe 1. 1. *Uſe*, is an Uſe of comfort to poore ſoules, that are in diſtreſſe, and ſuch a diſtreſſe ſometimes, as they thinke, and ſay, their cauſe is deſperate, and paſt recovery, ſo farre as their ſoules ſometimes ſhot into deſpaire. Conſider, how eaſie it is for you, to have your condition altered, and changed even in a moment. I tell thee, though (it may be) thou haſt beene caſt downe this twenty yeares, and thy ſoule is battered, broken, hardened, ſetled, fixed in ſerious thoughts of thy ruine, and reprobation, yet one good looke, one good word from God, ſhall in an inſtant diſpell all, after thy conceit and apprehenſion cleane; God can and doth often more with one word, in one moment, then Satan could doe in many yeares, with all the objections he could muſter up. The truth of this, in experience we often finde and obſerve in our ſelves and others. Yea, and ſometimes when he doth ſpeake peace, he gives ſuch ſatisfaction to a mans ſoule in that particular, that he would be content to be as many yeares more, in his ſpirituall conflicts, to enjoy but the like light, one halfe houre. Thus eaſie is it, for God to ſpeake peace. Though thou

thou thinkeſt thy ſelfe never ſo *farre off from peace*, yet he can ſpeake peace to them, that *are afarre off, as well as thoſe who are neere*, as himſelfe ſayes, *Iſaiah* 57. 19. for, ſayes he, it is *I* that ſpeake it. And when he doth it, then all thy doubts and diſtreſſes, will be forgotten, as the paines of a woman in travaile are when a Man childe is borne.

Secondly, is the Church in any diſtreſſe? (as the Church here at this time was) he can redeeme it out of all with a word. A word ſpoken to *Cyrus* his heart, did ſet them in their owne land againe, ſo you have it expreſſed, *Eſay* 44. 26, 27, 28. *The God that ſaith to Jeruſalem thou ſhalt be inhabited, and to the Cities of Judah, Ye ſhall be built*; you ſee his manner of doing it, it is but with a words ſpeaking; *he ſayes to Jeruſalem, be built*; and though there be never ſo great impediments in the way, he will *ſay to the deep, be dry*, that his people may paſſe over; he dryed up a whole Nation, a Sea of people, namely the *Babylonians*, to make way for this deliverance. And when they are conquered, and *Cyrus*, a new King comes to have the ſway of things, God ſpeakes to his heart alſo; *That ſaith of Cyrus, He is my ſhepheard*; and cauſeth him to ſay to Jeruſalem, Be thou built. Therefore goe to him and truſt him in all the diſtreſſes of the Church, as the Church alſo did, *Pſal.* 44. 4. *Thou art my King, command deliverances*; A *Mandamus* from God doth it, and will doe it at any time. *Uſe* 2.

Let God be never ſo angry, and his peoples diſtreſſe never ſo great, *yet he will ſpeake peace in the end* to his people: you heard before, that if we have peace, he onely muſt give it; and then, that he could, and was able with eaſe to doe it: and now you ſhall heare, that he will certainely doe it in the end.

The *Reaſons* the Text ſuggeſts are theſe:

1. If we conſider but who this God is, that is to ſpeake peace, *I will here what God the Lord will ſpeake*; he is *the Lord*, and therefore able to ſpeake what pleaſeth him; he is peculiarly *the God of peace*, and therefore willing to ſpeake peace. Now, 1. when it is ſaid, he is the *God of peace, and the God of comfort*, the meaning is, he is full of it, infinitely full of it, and out *of the abundance of thy heart, the mouth ſpeakes*: thoughts of peace, and love to his doe boile within him, as hatred, or malice doth in a malicious *Reaſon* 1.

malicious man towards his enemy; ſo as he cannot containe and forbeare expreſſing it towards him; that as *David* ſayes, his *thoughts did burne within him*, and at laſt, *brake forth*; ſo in God, *I know the thoughts I thinke towards you* (ſayes he to them of the captivity) *Jer.* 29. 11. *They are thoughts of peace, and not of evill.* And 2. beſides that theſe his thoughts of peace are taken up of himſelfe, his Sonne alſo hath beſpoken peace for us; and therefore God will ſpeake it. Even as *Joſeph*, though he ſpeake roughly a while to his brethren, yet could not in the end containe, *Gen.* 45. 1. ſo nor God.

Reaſon 2. . Secondly, Let us conſider, who they are to whom he is to ſpeake it, they *are his people*, as the Text hath it; and to them there is no queſtion, but he will ſpeake peace, though he ſeemes angry for a while. They are his people, that is the reaſon given, 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *He will not caſt off his people*: as alſo *Eſa.* 63. 8, 9. *When they rebelled, he was wroth, yet he ſaid, Surely, they are my people, ſo was I their Saviour. They?* why they are the *ſonnes of peace*, *Luke* 13. 6. ordained for peace, and therefore ſhall be ſure to have it; and although ſome differences may ariſe betwixt God and them, yet there is a naturall σοργὴ in the Lord that moves him to ſpeake peace in the end to them: as the dumbe ſonne of *Cræſus*, when he ſaw his father like to be killed, though he had never ſpake before, yet then out of an *impetus* of ſpirit, the ſtrings of his tongue were unlooſed, and he cried out to the murtherer, *Kill not King Cræſus*; ſo, when the enemies of his Church are ready to devour his people, and *Satan* is ready to ſwallow his childe up in diſpaire, then Gods bowells worke within him, and he can hold no longer, but cries, *Save my child, ſave my Church. Is Ephraim my pleaſant child*, (ſayes he) *Jer.* 31. 20? Well ſayes *God, though I ſpake againſt him*, and tooke him up and chid him ſoundly, *yet I cannot forget* my child ſayes he, nor my Fatherly affection to *him, but my bowels are ſtirred, and I will ſurely have mercy on him.*

Reaſon 3. Thirdly, otherwiſe if God did not in the end ſpeake peace they would indeed *returne to folly*, which is the third thing in the text. For this end of ſpeaking peace, is that they might not returne to folly, *Pſal.* 125. 3. *The rod of the wicked ſhall not alwayes lie upon the righteous, leſt they put forth their hand to iniquity.*

There-

Therefore at the laſt verſe, *Peace ſhall be upon Iſrael.* As for this cauſe he ſpeaks outward peace, ſo alſo inward, and ſuffers not the rod of Satan, and of his owne heavie diſpleaſure to lie upon their hearts: for elſe they would returne to the pleaſures of ſin; for every creature muſt have ſome delight; their ſpirits would faile and be tired out elſe, and wearied in good duties, if God ſhould not in the end ſpeake peace, *Eſay* 57. *The ſpirit would faile before me.* When the child ſwounds in the whipping, God lets fall the rod, and falls a kiſſing it, to fetch life into it againe. As it's a rule in Phyſicke, ſtill to maintaine nature: and therefore when that ſhall be in hazard to be deſtroyed, they leave giving purging Phyſicke, and give cordialls: ſo doth God with his people; though with purging Phyſicke, he often brings their ſpirits very weake, and low, yet he will uphold and maintaine their ſpirits, ſo as they ſhall not faile, and be extinguiſht, but then he will give cordialls to raiſe them up againe.

Uſe 3. What good heart that beares a child-like affection to God, would offend ſuch a God, that be thy diſtreſſes what they will be, will certainly ſpeake peace: then doe not put him to it, ſpend not upon that precious ſtock of his free grace and love. Tis true, *he is married to thee,* and therefore *though thou haſt gone a whoring after many lovers, Jer.* 3. 1, 2. 14. ſtill he ſayes, *Returne,* for *I am married to thee:* as therefore when man and wife are fallen out, they conſider, we muſt live together, and therefore they reconcile themſelves againe: ſo conſider, it muſt be between God and thee, and make it a meanes and motive to recover thee, as *Samuel* did to the Iſraelites, 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *You have committed this great ſinne, yet turne not aſide from following the Lord, for God will not caſt you off, you are his people.* Goe home to him againe, he will ſpeak peace. Think thus, the time will come wherein God will be friends againe with me, he and I cannot be ſtrange long; though I would, he will not, *Eſay* 57. 18, 19. though he went on ſtubbornly, yet God healed him, and would not loſe his childe, therefore I will returne of my ſelfe.

THE FOLLY OF *RELAPSING*, after Peace Spoken.

PSAL. 85. ver. 8.

——But let them turne no more to folly.

THE Sixth Obſervation is, That *Peace being ſpoken to* their hearts by GOD, *they ſhould returne no more to folly.* See this, *Ezra* 9. 13, 14. *Thou having puniſht us leſſe then we deſerve, and given us ſuch a deliverance as this, ſhould wee againe breake thy Commandements, wouldeſt thou not be angry with us till thou hadſt conſumed us?*

Reaſon 1. 1. Reaſon: becauſe it will be a greater aggravation in *ſinning*; It is made the aggravation of *Solomons ſinne*, 1 Kings 11. 9. *That God had appeared to him twice:* they were eſpeciall appearances and manifeſtations of mercy; and though ſuch doe now ceaſe, yet we reade of ſuch as are analogicall to them, as *John* 14. 21. Chriſt promiſeth to manifeſt himſelfe, which is by ſhedding abroad his love, and his Fathers love into the heart, which is evident dy the former words, *he ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him*; and after he ſaith, *we will come to him, and make our abode with him, ver.* 23. *and* 27. *My peace I will give unto you.* Now ſuch appearances will be ſet upon the ſcore of every *ſinne*, many yeares after, as they were upon *Solomons*. And the reaſon is, becauſe nothing wounds an ingenuous loving Nature more

more then matter of unkindneſſe: *If it had beene my enemy*, ſayes *David*, *I could have borne it*, Pſal. 55. 12. 14. *but it was thou oh man, mine acquaintance, we tooke ſweet counſell together*, a boſome friend to whom I had committed my ſecrets, opened my heart: Thus when God hath unboſomed himſelfe as it were to a man, and told him what was in his heart towards him, this goes nigh him if he lifts up the heele againſt him. And the reaſon of that further alſo is, 1 becauſe of all things elſe, a man cannot endure to have his love abuſed, you come nigh him when you doe ſo, for his love is himſelfe, and commands all in him, ſo that abuſe his love, and you ſtrike at his heart; it is leſſe to abuſe any excellency in a man, to reproach and extenuate his parts, learning, &c. though theſe are deare to him, but his love is his bowels. And therefore when God hath opened his heart to a man, and ſet his love upon him, and revealed it to him, and he carries himſelfe unworthily, *it paines him at the heart*. Beſides 2 it is againſt the law of Nature and of Nations to ſeeke out for a peace, and get it concluded, and then ſecretly to prepare for, and enter into a war; nothing more hatefull, or can exaſperate two Nations one againſt another more then this. It was the aggravation of *Abſoloms ſinne*, that being newly reconciled with his father, and taken into favour againe, after two yeares diſcountenance, he then began to rebell more cloſely.

2. Reaſon is intimated in the word *folly*, as if the Lord ſhould have ſaid, Set aſide the unkindneſſe and wrong you doe to me, yet therein you befoole your ſelves; you will have the worſt of it. And indeed, when God doth afterwards draw nigh to a man againe, upon that his recovery of his peace, it appeares to be folly, even in that mans owne apprehenſion; when he hath taſted how ſweet God is, then come and aske him, What, will ye returne to ſinne againe? he will then ſay, Aske me if I will wound or cut my fleſh: It is impoſſible, thinkes he, I ſhould any more be ſo beſotted; if there were no more motives, hee thinkes it the greateſt folly in the world. And therefore God on purpoſe chooſeth out that expreſſion, and placeth it here in this cauſe, becauſe it is indeed the greateſt folly in Gods ſight; and is ſo apprehended by our ſelves, looking upon *ſinne* after peace is ſpoken to us. It is folly to *ſinne* againſt God at any time, *Reaſon.* 2.

but eſpecially then; and that will appeare by theſe particulars.

1. Becauſe, before a man had that peace, he felt the bitterneſſe of ſinne, for God never ſpeaks peace, till that be felt: now that is an argument even to ſenſe, never to returne to it againe; which a foole will be warned by; *A burnt Childe dreads the fire*; even as a Child will take heede being taught by ſenſe. When a man ſhall be in great diſtreſſe, and his Conſcience ſhall ſuggeſt to him, as *Jer.* 4. 18. *Thy wayes and thy doings have produced theſe things to thee, this is thy wickednesſe*: a ſpeech like that when you ſay to your Children, when they have gotten any harme, or cold, or ſickneſſe, this is *your playing* and gadding and going in the Snow, and your eating of fruit, &c. ſo doth God ſpeake there to them when they were in diſtreſſe, this *is your wickednesſe, for it is better, it reacheth to the heart*, it woundeth the Conſcience, the wounding of which, of all elſe is the greateſt miſery. When once a man after this, hath peace reſtored to him, and he comes newly out of ſuch a diſtreſſe, aske him then how he likes turning to ſuch a *ſin* againe, and he will tell you, it is the greateſt folly in the world: Aske *David* if he will murther any more after his bones have been broken, and ſet againe.

2. Thou wilt eaſily acknowledge, it is folly to returne to *ſin* againe, if thou conſidereſt the termes, upon which thou didſt obtaine thy peace. Reckon what paines it coſt thee, to waſh out the guilt and ſtaine which ſinne had made, what vowes, and reſolutions thou madeſt, what bonds thou didſt ſeale unto, what promiſes never to returne, what prayers and tears, what raps and knocks at Heaven Gates, ere thou couldeſt get an anſwer, or God to ſpeak one word, he making as if he had not been within: why is it not folly now to loſe that in an inſtant, thou haſt beene a getting ſo long, haply many years, and with ſo much paines and coſt? You uſe it as an excuſe to prodigalls to ſay, Things lightly come by, are lightly gone; and yet you count them, and call them fooles for it, as not knowing what it is to earne a penny: how much more folly is it, when a man having afore morgaged his peace, and God reſtored it againe after much ſuit, and waiting many a terme, then to come home, and venture to caſt all away at one throw at dice? ſuch a foole art thou, when thou returneſt to ſinne; to drinke that at one draught which thou haſt

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beene getting many a yeare, what madneſſe is it? when thou haſt taken much paines, to waſh thy ſelfe, then to wallow in the mire againe, and make thy ſelfe new worke, what folly is it? who but children and fools will doe thus? That which the Church ſaid in another caſe, may well be alluded to in this, *Cant.* 5. 31. *I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?*

3. Conſider, what it is thou doſt hazard to loſe by returning to folly: *thy peace. David* loſt it, as appeares, *Pſal.* 51. 12. therefore ſayes he, *Reſtore to me the joy of thy ſalvation*; In loſing of which, thou wilt be ſo much a loſer, that if the *ſin* thou chooſeſt, were able to give thee all the world, it could not recompence thee; no not the loſſe of one houres communion with God, which in a moment will bring thee in more ſweetneſſe, then all thy ſins can doe to eternity. If all the pleaſures of ſin were contracted, and the quinteſſence of them ſtrained into one cup, they would not afford ſo much, as one drop of true peace with God doth, being let fall into the heart. *It is peace which paſſeth underſtanding.* Few pleaſures here doe exceed the ſenſes, nay the ſenſes are capable of more then the things can give; but this paſſeth underſtanding. *Gods loving kindneſſe is better then life.* If it were propounded to thee, thou muſt loſe thy life next moment, if thou ſhouldeſt commit ſuch a ſinne, wouldſt thou venture, if thou didſt beleeve it? Now *the loving kindneſſe of God is better then life*, and wilt thou loſe the enjoying of it, though but for a moment?

4. It is folly to returne againe, becauſe the pleaſures of ſinne will be much leſſe to thee after thou haſt had peace ſpoken. Take them at the beſt, when they are freſheſt, and when thy palate was moſt in reliſh, and taſte with them, when thou wert carnall, and ere thou kneweſt what ſweetneſſe was in God, and they then were but poor ſorry pleaſures: but now, they will prove far more empty then before; they are empty vaine pleaſures even to him that hath them in their flower, and in his ſeaſon of ſinning; and therefore all wicked men are weary, and doe inwardly complaine of their condition, onely they cannot finde ſweetneſſe in God, and ſo are faine to keepe themſelves to their huſks; but alas, to thee they are farre leſſe worth then to another man, who knows not God, and therefore thou art like to have a worſe bargaine of it; another man can make more money of a ſinne,

and get more pleasure out of it, then thou art able to doe.

For first, thy conscience having been scorched with sinne, as scalt flesh dears more, and is more sensible in comming to the fire, then other parts of the body, is become of a quicker sense; whereas wicked mens is seared, and so they commit all *uncleanesse with greedinesse*; but thine is tender and galled in the act, which allayes much of the pleasure of thy sinne, and mingleth the more bitternesse with it.

And 2. besides this galling of Conscience, which is common to thee with many an unregenerate man, thou hast a principle of grace, an inner man, which is dead to such pleasures, that tastes them not, that is like *Barzillai*, who through age, 2 *Sam.* 19. 35. could not taste either what he ate or dranke, as young men doe, no more can that *New man* in thee: and therefore it can be but halfe as pleasant to thee as to another man. If one side of a man be taken all with a numbe Palsie, what pleasure is it to that man, to exercise his limbs in the actions of life? He is but halfe a man, and lives but halfe a life; so it is with thee, when thou hast grace in thy heart, but halfe thy heart can take pleasure in sinning, that new man the other halfe reluctates, grieves for it, hates what thou dost; and all this must needs strike off much of the pleasure.

But 3. If we adde to this, that this new man in him having once tasted what sweetnesse is in God, and *How good the Lord is*, is then like a man that hath eaten sweet-meats, other things are out of taste with him, and therefore also it is folly to returne. *No man* (sayes Christ, *Luke* 5. *ult.*) *having dranke old wine, desireth new, for he saith the old is better*; a man used to high fare, cannot agree so well with thin diet: so the soule having beene used to taste of great pleasures in God, the impression and remembrance of them leaves his soule lesse satisfied then another mans; a stomach that hath beene enlarged to full diet, looks for it, and riseth more hungry from a slender meale: now communion with God inlarges the faculties, and widens them, and makes them more capable of greater joyes then other men have, and therefore the creature is lesse able to fill them; still he remembers with much griefe, whilest he is eating his husks, what fare he had in his Fathers house: and oh, *Then it was better with me,*

me, then now. Call me not *Naomi*, but call me *Marah*, as she said, *for I went out full, and am come home empty*; so doth he say, when he comes from the act of sinning, he went with his heart full of peace, and meeting with a bargaine of sinning, thought to eek out his joy, and make it fuller, but he comes home empty.

1. Use, is to those who have had peace spoken to them, let them at such times feare themselves and God most, for then comes in this, as you see here, as the most seasonable admonition that can be given, to returne no more to folly. 1. Feare God then most; for of all times else, then sinnes provoke him most; to come and call him *Father*, and *the guide of your mouth*, and yet to fall to sinne, this is *to doe as evill as you can*, you cannot doe worse. *Jer.* 3. 4. 5. So *Ezra* 9. *After such an escaping, should we againe breake thy Commandements, wouldest thou not be angry till thou hadst consumed us?* In times of affliction it is the property of a good child to love God most: in times of speaking peace, to *fear God* most and his *goodnesse*, and to feare to offend him for his goodnesse sake. Did I onely say, that God is *provoked* most then, if you returne to folly? Nay, I adde further, he *is grieved*, which is more then to be provoked; and therefore you shall marke that expression and admonition not to *grieve Gods Spirit*, then comes in, when the *Spirit hath sealed us up to the day of redemption*, *Ephes.* 4. 30. Then by sinning we are said more properly to grieve him then before, when he hath so far ingaged himselfe to love a man, and expressed himselfe to him, and sets his Seale upon him for his. God is angry with wicked mens sinnes, but he is grieved for yours. To grieve him is more then to anger him. Meere anger is an affection can ease it selfe by revenge, and by comming even againe with the party, and when we can or intend to doe so, our mindes are not so much aggrieved, but please themselves rather to thinke of the revenge which we meane to execute: so when wicked men sinne whom God meanes to meet with, he is said to be angry rather then grieved; and sayes, *I will ease my selfe of mine adversaries*, Esay 1. 24. *and avenge my selfe of mine enemies.* But here, as when a mans wife that lyes in his bosome, or his childe shall wrong him: so is it when one sinnes, whom God hath set himselfe

ſelfe to love, and done much for, and made known his everlaſting kindneſſe unto, and ſealed to the day of redemption: this goes to his heart, grieves him rather then angers him, and ſuch are the trueſt and deepeſt griefs. What ſhould he doe with you in this caſe? if afflict you, and by that meanes goe about to turne you from your iniquity, therein he ſhall but afflict himſelfe as it were, for *Though they rebelled, yet when they were afflicted, he was afflicted, Eſay* 63. 9, 10. As when a Father that is a Magiſtrate, or as one that maintainesa Student in a Coledge, if either puniſheth a child, or pupill in his purſe, he puniſheth himſelf, ſo muſt God afflict himſelfe to afflict you. Put not the Lord into theſe ſtraits if you have any love in you. And 2. as thou art therefore to feare God moſt then, ſo thy ſelfe moſt, and to be more watchfull over thy owne heart; thou art then apt to returne to folly, if thou takeſt not heed; as when a man hath beene very hot, or ſweat much, he is apt to take the greateſt cold. *Hezekiah*, after God ſealed peace to him, and anſwered his prayers, and renewed the leaſe of his life, his heart got cold, he did returne to folly. The reaſon is, becauſe then the heart is apt to grow leſſe watchfull, and to thinke it ſelfe fortified enough againſt any temptation. As Saint *Peter* having ſeene Chriſt transfigured in the Mount, grew confident in his owne ſtrength. And know that the Devill watcheth ſuch an opportunity moſt, for he gets a great victory if he can foile thee then, after he hath been foiled himſelfe, and when thou art moſt triumphing over him; how many battles have beene loſt through ſecurity of victory and recoyling of the enemy? and beſides, our corrupt nature, ſo farre as unrenewed, is apt to gather heart to it ſelfe, to ſlight ſinne, as thinking its pardon eaſily gotten.

Therefore when thou art tempted, labour often to renew thoſe thoughts, which thou hadſt of thy ſinne at that time, when thou wert ſuing for peace, before thy peace was gotten; when thou wouldeſt have given a world for Gods favour; and alſo what thoughts thou hadſt of it, when God ſpake peace, how thou didſt abhor it, yea, thy ſelfe, and looke what ſin was moſt bitter to thee and an enemy to thy peace; as if uncleanneſſe, idleneſſe, neglect of prayer, ill company, &c. and preſerve in thy heart thoſe bitter apprehenſions of it, and ſay of it, thou haſt

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beene a bloudy ſinne to me, as *Moſes* wife ſaid of her husband: and though I have got peace, and my life ſaved, yet it was a bloudy ſinne to *Chriſt*, his bloud was ſhed to purchaſe this my peace, and ſhall I returne to it?

And when tempted to it againe, have recourſe to the kindneſſe God ſhewed thee in pardoning, and ſay, How ſhall I doe this, and ſinne againſt God? ſay as he ſaid, *Is this thy kindneſſe to thy friend?* 2 *Sam.* 16. 16. and what, ſhall I *Abſalom*-like, now I am new reconciled to my Father, fall a plotting treaſon againe? what ſhall I make more worke for prayer, more worke for God, breake my bones againe, and lie roaring againe? Thinke thus, I was burnt in the hand afore, I ſhall be racked ſurely now, *Sin no more leſt a worſe thing befall thee.*

Uſe. 3. The doctrine of aſſurance (if not abuſed) and of Gods ſpeaking peace to men is no dangerous doctrine to make men ſecure and preſumptuous in ſinning: when peace is preached in any mans heart, this uſe naturally flows from that doctrine, *returne no more to folly*. The very ſcope of the whole Epiſtle of Saint *John* is to helpe all beleevers to aſſurance, as appears by the 1 *John* 1. 4, 5. and the 5. *Chap.* 13. *Theſe things I write to you, that ye might have communion with God, and that your joy might be full.* But this will open a way to all licentiouſneſſe. No ſayes S. *John* Chap. 2. 1. *Theſe things I write unto you that you ſin not*; nothing guards the heart more againſt tentations, then the peace of God: it is ſaid to *guard* the heart, *Phil.* 4. 2. Yea and if you doe ſin, the aſſurance of Gods love is the ſpeedieſt way to recover you; ſo it followes, *If any one doth ſinne, we have an Advocate with the Father, &c. And he that hath this hope in him*, that is, to live with Chriſt, and *knows what manner of love the Father beares us, purifies himſelfe as he is pure*, 1 *John* 3. 1, 2, 3. If there were no more but ſelfe-love in a man, it were then no wonder if he doth abuſe it. For ſelfe-love, where the love of God is wanting, is unthankfull and ungratefull, willing to take all the love and kindneſſe which is afforded, and abuſe it and worke upon it for it's own advantage; and it is true alſo that becauſe we have too much of this principle unmortified in us, therefore God truſteth ſo few with ſo much aſſurance, becauſe they would abuſe it. But where true love to God is ſeated, and much of it implanted,

there the love of God and the peace of God doth as kindly and naturally enkindle and enflame and ſet it aworke, even as arguments ſuitable to ſelfe-love doe worke upon, and ſtirre that principle. For grace is more for God then for our ſelves, it being the image of Gods holineſſe, whoſe holineſſe conſiſts in this, to aime at himſelfe in all: and therefore when Gods free grace towards a man is revealed, it raiſeth him up to higher ſtraines of love to God and hatred of *ſinne*. And therefore it is obſervable, *Pſal.* 51.12. that *David* when he *prayes for the reſtoring of the joy of his ſalvation*, he *prayes* not ſimply for it or alone, but withall *prayes* for a *free ſpirit*, *Eſtabliſh me with thy free Spirit*: that is, a ſpirit of ingenuity, which is kindly, ſweetly, and freely wrought upon: therefore when we have a free ſpirit wrought in us, then that free love that is in God towards us, will worke moſt kindly upon it, and conſtrains us to *love him that loved us firſt*. *The love of Chriſt conſtraines us*, 2 *Cor*, 5.14. *Becauſe we thus judge that if Chriſt dyed for all, then they which live ſhould not live unto themſelves, but unto him that dyed for them*: Saint *Paul* gives the reaſon, why this love of Chriſt did thus conſtraine him, becauſe he *did thus judge*, that is, this conſideration of Chriſts love, he having a principle of love in his heart to Chriſt, he found to be a powerfull prevailing reaſon to perſwade him to live to Chriſt. Having a new judgement he ſaw force and ſtrength in the argument. And ſo ſhall we if we thus judge, and it will have this naturall conſequence as naturally to follow upon it in our hearts, as any reaſon in any other kinde hath, that is brought to enforce any other concluſion. And therefore as the minde is *conſtrained* (as it were) to aſſent to a truth proved by force of reaſon, that if you grant this, then this or that will follow: ſo becauſe we judge this reaſonable by an argument drawne out of *loves Topicks*, *that if Chriſt dyed for all, who otherwiſe muſt themſelves have dyed*, *that then they ſhould live to him*, this will *conſtraine* us to love him, and live to him: *Amore Dei eſt extaticus, nec ſe ſinit eſſe ſui Juris*.

THIS

THis Text and admonition here gives a just occasion to consider a little of that so often questioned case of Conscience concerning relapses of Gods children into the same *sins* and folly againe, and whether after peace spoken, Gods people may returne againe to folly. Some have held, that a man after a second repentance could not fall into the same *sinne* againe; others if he did, it excluded him from mercy for time to come. For the comfort of some poore soules, whose case and tentation this may be, I will speake somewhat though sparingly and with caution.

The cause of relapsing into he same sinne after peace spoken, resolved.

1. The Scripture no where excludeth those from the state of grace, or barres mercy from those that have relapsed into the same *sinne*, especially so long as in regard of the manner of their *sinning*, it be but folly, not wickednesse or wilfull *sinning*; that is, rather proceeding out of errour of understanding, and heat, and impetuousnesse of foolish affections, then obstinacy and malice in the will, and with *despite of the spirit of grace*, *Heb.* 10. 27.

Yea, 2. In Scripture we meet with such passages and promises, as may undoubtedly uphold any soule, that hath so fallen after peace received, into the same *sin*, and preserve him from apprehending himselfe excluded therefore from mercy and the state of grace: As *Hos.* 14. 4. *I will heale their back-sliding, I will love them freely*; unlesse they had fallen after repenting and former healing, it could not have beene called backsliding, and yet this he promises to heale, and withall shewes the ground that moved him to it, his loving them freely: for if in any thing his free love is shewn to any of his children, and drawne out, it is in healing againe such a backsliding soule after recovery and peace given. For they falling into the same *sinne*, which hath beene repented of and healed, provokes GOD more then a thousand other acts of *sinnes* formerly committed, though of the same kinde. And therein also to shew his free love, that he can pardon even the abuse of love it selfe, he leaves some thus to *sin* after his love shed abroade in their hearts. Some he shewes his free love unto, in keeping them from *sinning*, others in pardoning them, and giving them repentance: they are but severall

wayes of drawing it forth; ſo that if in any thing, herein his free love is ſhown, for if it were not free, it would never endure it ſelfe to be abuſed. And likewiſe the ſure mercies of *David* are then ſhowne, when God *multiplies to pardon*: ſo *Eſay* 55. 3. having mentioned the promiſe of the *ſure mercies of David*, He promiſes to *multiply to pardon*, as it is in the Originall, *ver.* 7. which are thus joyned, both becauſe the ſureneſſe of his Covenant is therein ſhowne, and becauſe we might haply multiply to *ſin*; and at leaſt it ſuppoſeth the poſſibility of it againe. God likewiſe runs upon ſuch a ſuppoſition in that expreſſion of his, to his own people, *Jer.* 3. 1, 2. They *ſay, if a man put away his wife, and ſhe becomes another mans, ſhall not the land be greatly polluted? but thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers, yet returne againe to me*, ſaith the Lord. He ſpeakes to her, as to one had beene his Wife, who though ſhe had not beene put away by him, but had put away her ſelfe and runne away, not once but often, and that with many lovers, and ſometimes in the midſt of her whoredomes, had come in and made challenge of his former love, and pleaded his former mercy to her, and yet fallen back againe, *ver.* 4, 5. (where he addes, *Wilt thou not from this time cry, My Father, and thou art the guide of my youth?* that is, I know ſayes God, you will come now and cry as heretofore you have done and ſay, Oh thou art my father and my Husband, and confidently ſtill claime an intereſt in me upon my former kindneſſe, and *yet doe as evill as you can*, for you cannot doe worſe then thus to abuſe my love) yet for all this at the 12. *ver. returne thou backſliding, Iſrael*, ſaith the Lord, *for I am married to you*, *v.* 14. That which he doth thus to a nation, he may doe to a particular man who is his childe.

Examp. 1. Againe. 3. There are not altogether examples wanting for this.

1. We finde *Sampſon* a godly man (whom yet we would ſcarce have thought ſuch but that we finde his name in the liſts of thoſe worthies, *Heb.* 11.) enſnared with a *Philiſtine* woman, againſt the counſell of his parents, *Judg.* 14. 3. who clearly laid open his *ſinne* to him, and he was in the event reproved for his folly, for his wife deceived him, told his riddle to his enemies, which he in the end perceived, and further to reprove him,

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in the iſſue ſhe was given away to another, *ver.* 16, 17, 20. from all which paſſages of reproofe, an holy man that had his eyes in his head, could not but ſee his errour; and yet againe a long while after this, (twenty years after, *Judg.* 15. 20. (when certainly ere that he had repented of this his *ſinne*, for which his parents before, and after, God ſo clearly did rebuke him) he went to Gaza, *Judg.* 16. *ver.* 1. *and ſaw an harlot and went in unto her*, and there eſcaped narrowly with his life at mid night. And *ver.* 4. After that alſo it came to paſſe he fell in love with another, as bad as any of the former, *Delilah*, who was his ruine. But his returning thus to folly coſt him deare; for in the end he was taken as a captive to the *Philiſtims* his enemies, and that through her falſehood; deprived of his ſtrength he had ſpent upon theſe women; had his eyes, thoſe betraying lights put out, that had enſnared him; and himſelfe made a foole of, to make his enemies ſport. So as no child of God can take any great encouragement thus to returne to folly, for the future, by his example, though comfort they may have there from in caſe they have returned for the time paſt.

2. Another example may be that of *Jehoſhaphat* who committed a great *ſinne*, in joynieg with *Ahab* that wicked King that *ſold himſelfe to worke wickedneſſe*, 2 *Chron.* 18. 1, 2, 3. and he was foretold what would be the ſucceſſe of that confederacy and journey, by *Micaiah*, before he went with him to battle, and after in the battle it ſelfe, where he hardly eſcaped with his life, and by an extraordinary providence at his *prayer* was delivered, *ver.* 31, 32. and as if that were not ſufficient, God ſends another Prophet to him, *Chap.* 19. 2. who with open mouth reproves him and diſcovers to him his *ſinne*, *Shouldeſt thou helpe the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord:* which meſſage to ſo good a man doubtleſſe was not in vaine, but humbled him for that his ſinne, and wrought repentance in him to avert that wrath. And yet after that great and miraculous deliverance of him and his people, *Chap.* 20. we finde him relapſing into the ſame ſinne, *ver.* 35. *After this did Jehoſhaphat joyn himſelf with Ahaziah King of Iſrael, who did very wickedly, & he joyned himſelf with him to make ſhips to goe to Tarſhiſh:* which another Prophet in like manner reproveth, *Examp.* 2.

and likewise God himselfe rebuketh by the like ill successe of that league to the former, *the ships were broken, ver.* 37.

3. Saint *Peter*, a man, who seemed by other of his carriages, bold enough, was yet three severall times surprized with base feare: once when he tempted Christ not to hazard himselfe at *Jerusalem*, where Christ had told him that hee was to suffer: *Mat.*16.21,22,23. *Master* (sayes he) *spare thy selfe:* upon which speech Christ calls him *Satan*, rebuketh him more sharply, then at any other time, for which there was a more then ordinary cause. Saint *Peter* thought that if his Master should suffer at *Jerusalem*, that himselfe, and the rest should not be safe: That speech therefore proceeded from feare, and therefore Christ doth immediately thereupon call for selfe-deniall, and taking up the Crosse, *ver.* 24. And this was immediately after peace spoken, *ver.* 16, 17, 18. Christ had never more comfortably given testimony to Saint *Peter*, and his *faith*, then there. Yet againe, after this Christ had him up into the Mount, and transfigured himselfe, to hearten him against that triall to come, which made him so confident; yet then he denied him, at his arraignement: when againe Christ immediately upon that lookt backe upon him with so sweet a looke, as broke his heart for this his folly; and so he returned againe, and it cost him many a teare; and Christ after the Resurrection, owned him againe, more then any of the rest, bade them that first met him, *Goe tell Peter*, Hee mentions him by name, and in speciall, *goe tell* him the first news of it: and then also he asked him, *Peter, lovest thou me?* and he said, *Lord, thou knowest I love thee:* as if he had said, Though I have played the wretch, yet *I love thee:* upon this, though he grew more bold, *Acts* 4.13. yet *Gal.*2.11,12. we finde him falling unto the grudging of the same disease, which cast him into another fit, he *dissembled, fearing them of the Circumcision:* this was a spice of the former sinne, though not so grosse, and though the outward acts in these sins were divers in their occasions, yet they were all acts and buds of the same root of bitternesse; and may as well be called sins of the same kinde, as the committing differing acts of uncleanesse, are reckoned falling into the same sinne.

In the fourth place, if the Scriptures had beene utterly silent

in examples, yet reason consonant to other principles and grounds of Divinity, and of the Scriptures, might prrswade the same.

1. If he may after the most serious and thorough repentance fall againe, into as grievous a sinne of another kind, and returne: why not into the same againe? I confesse there is some disparity, which might make him more averse, and set him in some more remoteneſſe, from the same *sinne* he hath particularly repented of, then another; which shall be considered in its place: Yet the difference cannot be supposed such, as should make the one possible and not the other: all true repentance working the heart to an abominating every *sinne*, as well as any; and therefore if it were true, it was for that particular *sinne*, as *sinne*; and then it would worke the like against all, and every *sinne*, according to the measure of *sinfulneſſe*; and though it may, and doth worke a more keen, and speciall hatred against that particular *sinne*, a man hath been most stung with, yet still, this is but so farre, as this aggravation, (*to fall into the same sinne againe*) may cause such a relapse, to be more sinfull then another *sinne*: and so farre, that upon that ground he is, and may be more set and strengthened against it, then against another *sinne*. But then, if the supposition fall upon another grosse *sinne*, never before committed, the sole and single act of which, other circumstances make as haynous, even as this reiterated act of *sinne* formerly committed, can be, then the one is equally as possible as the other. But however, yet still the difference is but in degrees: namely, in that the heart is enlongated a degree, or so, further from that sinne formerly committed, then any other: which will not therefore so vary the case, (as *magis & minus* doe not) that it should be made impossible to fall into the one, and not into the other. *Reason* 1.

2. *Reason:* if he may fall into some grosse sinne, which at first conversion, he did above all other humble himselfe for: and yet, *that* same *initiall repentance*, did not put him into such an impossibility of falling into that sinne againe: Why then should a renewed act of repentance of the same, or for some other reiterated sinne, be supposed to have such virtue in it; as to make him shot-free for ever, from the same fiery dart againe? *Reason* 2.

Againe

Againe thirdly: Let it be conſidered, from whence it ſhould be that a renewed, or indeed any act of true repentance, though never ſo great, and intenſe, ſhould have ſuch a tranſcendent, eternall, and invincible vertue in it, and priviledge annexed to it; for how *is* it, that repentance doth ſtrengthen us againſt ſinne, but by reſtoring the decayed frame of Grace, to a better conſtitution and greater degree of ſtrength then before; and by raiſing it, above a mans luſts & above that luſt, more then all other? as in *David*, when he prayed, *Create in me a cleane heart*, which, through his *ſinne* of uncleanneſſe, was in an eſpeciall manner, defiled with a proneneſſe to that ſinne: But yet withall remember, that *that* new frame of heart, and ſtrength gotten by that renewed repentance, and *that* augmentation, and increaſe of hatred againſt, and abominating that ſinne wrought by it, is all but a creature; as grace, and every new degree of grace is: and therefore for preſerving us, hath in it ſelfe but the power, and force of a created habit, which may be prevailed againſt, by the ſinne that is in us; and can no more, nay much leſſe put us into a ſtate of confirmation againſt any particular ſinne, then the grace of the Angels could of it ſelfe confirme them in a ſtate againſt all ſinne. And as for the impreſſion of that bitterneſſe, which in our repentance for that ſinne fallen into, was made upon our hearts; that alſo can be ſuppoſed to have but the like force upon our ſpirits, *that* the impreſſion of *joy unſpeakable and glorious*, hath upon the heart in thoſe heavenly raptures, which beleevers ſometimes enjoy; yea and the latter of theſe will eaſily be ſuppoſed to be of the greater efficacy of the two; and both but creatures: Now thoſe raviſhing joyes are not yet ſuch immortall and everlaſtingly quickning cordials, that put ſuch ſpirits into a man, as to preſerve him from ſwounds, and faintings of ſpirit for ever: and though, whileſt they abide and are preſent to the heart, they doe then raiſe it above all things here below: yet when a man hath beene a while off from that Mount, and hath converſed a while with things here againe below; then that luſtre wears away, as the glory that ſhined in *Moſes* face did: and after a while, the ſenſe and preſent taſte of thoſe joyes wears out; and when that is gone, the bare remembrance of them which is left, hath not in their abſence, ſuch an infallible, though

though a great efficacy to preserve his minde in an everlasting disrelishing former delights; but that he may, and often doth fall in love againe too too much with them: although indeed whilest the present sense of them did abide upon the heart, it abstracted the minde from all things here below. And hence a man is apt to *fall from his first love*, *Rev.*2. and from that high esteeme of spirituall things; as the *Galatians Gal.*4.15. *Where is the blessednesse you spake of*, sayes Saint *Paul* to them? therefore answerably the remembrance of the bitternesse of any *sinne*, felt in our deepest humiliations, is much lesse able to preserve a man, nor is the impression and dint made so lasting, nor the scars and wounds of conscience continuing for ever so fresh, as everlastingly to preserve and deter us from falling into the same *sin* againe. For both are but creatures, and at best but arguments drawne from sense, and experience within our selves, and have but an humane created power, which is not alwaies efficacious; especially seeing GOD hath ordained us *to live by faith more then by sense*, for faith is appointed by GOD to be our more constant keeper, 1 *Pet.* 1.5. *We are kept through faith unto salvation*, and by it more surely and more constantly then by impressions of joy, or sorrow, which are made to sense: and yet we are not kept by it of it selfe, but by *the power* of GOD; so then we are *kept by the power of God* as the principall supporter, and guardian, *through faith*, as the instrumentall, and by it rather then by sense or any other grace of sorrow or repentance; becaus faith caries the heart out of it selfe wholly into the hands of God *as a faithfull Creator*, (who is the strength of Israel, to *keep* a man *from every evill worke*) as not being able to secure it selfe against any sin through the power of any mortification, or strength that any other grace or degree of grace hath built, no not for one moment; and therefore is as dependant upon God after a fall, and a renewed repentance out of it, yea and more then before he fell, and his owne wofull experience hath reason to make him so. The like instance to illustrate the truth of this we may draw from the assurance of faith it selfe. For even the assurance of faith it selfe, (which is an act properly belonging to that grace called therefore *the assurance of faith*, *Heb.* 10.20.) which doth strengthen us as much against doubting when it is joyned with joy unspeak-

able and glorious, as repentance can doe againſt any other *ſinne:* and whileſt it is upon us in the ſtrength of it, a beleever is apt to think himſelfe armed and ſtrengthened, and ſo eſtabliſht, as that he ſhall never queſtion Gods love any more, or the pardon of his *ſinnes:* and yet experience ſhewes it, that the guilt of ſinne prevailes ſometimes againe, after this, and the ſame doubts ariſe, and prevaile as much as ever; neither will the remembrance of the former aſſurance be alwayes of force enough to reſiſt them; for he may come to queſtion that aſſurance it ſelfe alſo; and ſo *forget that he was purged from his old ſins.* and if the guilt of ſinne prevaile in the Conſcience againe, againſt ſuch a renewed and ſetled act of *faith*, why may not the power of a luſt prevaile in the members, afrer a renewed act of repentance?

Reaſon. 4. 4. If it be ſaid, that a renewed act of thorow repentance doth keepe a man, not by any peculiar vertue in it ſelfe alone, but by the power of God concurrent with it: Then I demand to ſee the promiſe wherein God hath infallibly obliged and ingaged his power, upon ſuch a renewed act of repentance, to preſerve from falling into that ſinne of all other for ever; without which no man in faith can affirme it; and without which there is an *it may be*, and a ſuppoſition of ſuch a poſſibility, as ſometime it falleth out, and reduced to exiſtence. GOD indeed hath ſaid, that *if We fall, he will put under his hand*, to break that fall, that it ſhall not ruine us; but not ſo to keep us in his hands, as we ſhall be out of danger of falling againe. A renewed act of repentance is indeed an ordinance ſanctified to preſerve a man; yet, but in the ſame manner that other ordinances are, as Prayer, and the Word preacht, and admonition, &c. with which GOD doth not alwayes ſo infallibly cooperate, as efficaciouſly to worke alwayes that which they ſerve to.

5. If there were not ſuch a poſſibility, as might and doth ſometimes fall out; then every regenerate man after ſuch a renewed act of repentance, might ſecure himſelfe againſt the committing that groſſe act againe for ever; but ſo he can never doe againſt any particular act of ſin, but that ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt. Saint *Paul* therefore exhorts, when a brother is fallen into a ſinne, *to reſtore ſuch an one with the ſpirit of meekneſſe*; upon this conſideration, *conſid ering thy ſelfe, leſt thou alſo be tempted*; and

and he laies the exhortation upon those who are most *spirituall*; *Ye that are spirituall, restore such an one, considering thy selfe, lest thou also be tempted*, *Gal.* 6. 1. so as he speaks of such, as have their hearts raised up to the best frame, through the most deep, and serious repentance: and now we will suppose one, that hath formerly fallen himselfe into the same sin, which another is fallen into, but not yet restored, but himselfe is returned by repentance out of it: (for indeed, such a spirituall man, is of all other like to be the meekest bonesetter of a man fallen) and even such doth Saint *Paul* exhort to consider, that themselves may for the time to come, be also or in like manner tempted, that is, fall as this man fell; and therefore *so be tempted* as to fall into the same sin againe, that he was fallen into. And if any man could be secure from the like fall againe, he had been out of the reach of this exhortation to this duty upon that ground mentioned, as not capable of it. But the holy Ghost hath elsewhere, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. told us, that there is *no tentation which is common to man*, but is incident to befall any man, at any time; and therefore *ver.* 12. *exhorts him that standeth, to take heed lest he fall:* indeed that temptation which *is common to Devills with men*, the sin of finall despaire, and against the holy Ghost, &c. a regenerate man may through the grace of Christ, secure himselfe against: but, all such *sins as are common to man*, from these or any of them, no man in any state, can without an extraordinary revelation, secure himselfe from the commission of.

Onely I adde these Cautions concerning this case.

1. There are *two* sorts of corruptions. First, most grosse corruptions, which Saint *Peter* calls, τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου, the *defilements of the World*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. they being the common mire, or kennell, wherein the uncleane swine of this world wallow, and which the Apostle calls such *works of the flesh as are manifest*, *Gal.* 5. 19. even to the light of Nature; such as are adultery, fornication, drunkennesse, &c. and by those two expressions doe they distinguish them from a sort of more spirituall and refined lusts. For secondly, there are corruptions more spirituall, as pride, secret love of the world. Now, for those grosse corruptions, which are contrary, even to common honesty, and (to to use *Jobs* phrase) *are punisht by the Judges*, *Job* 31. 11. which 1. *Caution.*

profane men wallow in, a godly man hath more strength against them, so as it is not so ordinary for him to be entangled againe and againe with these; for where but morall principles are, these are abstained from, as we see in the Pharisee, *I am no Adulterer, &c.* therefore, where grace is, much more. And some *sinnes* are more opposite to the spirit of *holinesse*, and lesse compatible with grace, as uncleanesse, of which Saint *Paul* sayes, *God hath not called us unto uncleanesse*, but to holinesse, 1 *Thes.* 4. 7. it is in an especiall manner there opposed to *holinesse*, and such as these are *workes of the flesh* which are *manifest*, even to nature, to civill men: and therefore when they are often fallen into, they doe manifest, that the heart is but flesh. And although the limits, how seldome or how often, cannot be set concerning relapses into these, or any sinnes; yet, in an ordinary course, it may be said, that few *godly* men fall into such sinnes againe and againe: God keepes them from such in any ordinary providence, that scandals should not arise: they being sinnes which all the world takes notice of. But those other sinnes of rash anger, and love of the world and spirituall pride, &c. these being lesse manifest, and sitting more close to our spirits, godly men are more subject unto.

Yet secondly: we must againe distinguish:

1. There are the inward lustings to those outward acts: now, though grace weakneth the very lustings within, yet, takes them not wholly away: *The spirit that is in us*, (that is,) in us Saints, sayes Saint *James*, *lusteth to envy*: and as to envy, so to all other *sinnes*.

And secondly, there are the outward grosse acts of such *sins*; and therein the weakenesse of *sin* in a regenerate man, and strength of grace shewes it selfe most in preserving from them: for as *to will* is *present with me*, sayes S. *Paul*, *to will what is good, yet how to performe it I am not able*, *Rom.* 7. 18. So on the contrary, to lust the heart may be ready, and lust may soon rise up in rebellion, but when it should come to the act, there is a weakenesse discovered; they come to the birth, and want strength often to bring forth: the contrary lusting & prevailing of grace being then seen & discovering it selfe: that it fareth with a regenerate man in this cause often, as with a man that is deadly wounded; who riseth up

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to strike his enemy, and thinkes to runne him thorow, but sinks downe againe, *medio conatu*, when his sword is at his enemies breasts, through a deficiencie of spirits; or as a man in a Palsie, or the Gout, who thinks he is able to walke, till he comes to try, and then he findes a weakenesse which makes him fall back again: Thus even when the whole forces of lusts are mustered up, yet the weapons fall out of their hands. Humours in a healthfull constitution, may stirre and boake in the stomacke when yet they come not up, nor prevaile unto vomiting. In that place aforenamed *Gal.* 5. the Apostle seemes not to deny but that in the most regenerate, lustings may arise, for *the flesh* (sayes he) *lusteth against the spirit, ver.* 17. but yet as for outward acts, he tels them, *ver.* 16. *That if they walke in the spirit*, that is, in the prevalency of the spirit, keeping up a holy frame of heart above the flesh, that then *yee shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh*: for that frame of heart so kept up will hinder the outward fulfilling of the lust: which is never done till flesh and corruption is actually raised above the spirit, and gets more voices to carry it, till the spirit be under hatches and the flesh above, and so steeres the helme: otherwise the lusting of the spirit against the flesh, will hinder the outward doing, and fulfilling of a lust. For the reason he gives, *ver.* 17. *So as you cannot doe what you would*, implies, that not onely lustings, which arise without consent, may be in such a man, but further, much of the will may be wonne to consent to them, to like them; when yet there is not strength enough to carry it on to the outward act; *you cannot doe what you would.* And what those workes of the flesh are, which are manifest works of the flesh and which Christians whilest they walke in the Spirit fulfill not, hee mentions and reckons up in the following words. And this is the more ordinary frame of a Christians heart; for *verse* 24. (sayes hee) *they that are Christs have crucified the affections and lusts*, that is, so farre, as not to fulfill them.

3. He may more easily fall into a grosse *sin* of another kinde, then into the same after speciall repentance for it, and peace spoken in the pardon of it. Because true tepentance especially fortifies the heart against that *sinne* which a man hath most repented him of; and sincerity lies more in watching over that

ſin then any other: ſo ſayes *David*, *Pſal.*18. *I was upright, and kept my ſelfe from mine iniquity*, that eſpeciall *ſin* which was eminently his *ſin*. A mans arme that hath been broke, will, if well ſet, rather breake in ſome other place then where it was broke at the firſt. Hence ſometimes it falls out, that that which was a godly mans boſome ſin before converſion, continues not to be ſo after, but, another ſteps up in the roome of it, by reaſon that he then endeavoureth to waſh out that great ſtraine, moſt; and ſpendeth the moſt of the Fullers ſope, to purge himſelfe from it; and ſo becomes, ever after, moſt watchfull over it; and ſets in this his weakeſt place, the ſtrongeſt garriſon, and a watch, to prevent the enemy. And as an act of ſome preſumptuous *ſinne*, though it inclines the heart more to all *ſinne*, then before, yet, eſpecially to commit that kind of *ſin* againe, rather then any other: ſo on the contrary, it is in a ſound and ſolemne repentance, for ſome eſpeciall ſin; and in the endeavouring, to mortifie ſome eſpeciall member of the body of *ſin*: (to mortifie which, not onely in the bulke and generall, but alſo particularly and apart in the ſeverall members of it, the *Holy Ghoſt* exhorts *Col.*3.5.) though thereby, the whole habit of the body of *ſin* is purged and weakned, yet that particular *ſin* which we aime eſpecially to have mortified, is through Gods bleſſing more ſubdued then any other. We ſee Idolatry was the *ſin* which the people of Iſrael relapſed into, againe and againe; yet when they were once throughly humbled by the Captivity for it, they never returned to it of all *ſins* elſe, not to this day: ſo as it may be ſaid, as was foretold, haply in another caſe, *Ezek.* 16.43. *Thou ſhalt not commit this lewdneſſe of all thy abominations*: *Jonah*, though he would haply never runne away from God againe after his Gaole delivery out of the *Whales* belly; yet, immediately after peace ſpoken to his heart, he falls into a ſinne of another kind; in to a paſſion of extream anger & peeviſhneſſe, & quarrelling againſt God. And the reaſon of this eſpeciall tenderneſſe to fall into the ſame ſinne, is, becauſe the Conſcience looks upon a relapſe into that ſin, to be more hainous, then into any other ſin of another kind; becauſe of that aggravation of it, which thereby would ſtaine and die it: and although a ſin of another kind ſhewes the variety of corruption more; yet, this is more againſt the power and worke of repen-

repentance it selfe, which was particularly exercised about that sin: and also breaks, and dissolveth all bands of a mans vowes, covenants, prayers, &c. made against it in particular, and so is made more grievous. And this we may see in *Ezraes* humbling himselfe for that great sinne of the people in joyning themselves in marriage with the people of the Land, when he did set himself to humble himselfe for them, together with those *that feared God, Chap.* 9. 4. What an hideous apprehension of the hainousnesse of that sin, if they should againe fall into it, did that dayes repentance raise his heart up unto? as appeares, *verse* 14. *Should we againe breake thy commandements, and joyne in affinity with them, wouldest thou not destroy us, till thou hadst consumed us,* and *till there was no escaping?* Into which sinne, yet, the people did againe fall, after they had repented of it, with a solemne confession, and promise of amendment, which is recorded *Chap.* 10. *ver.* 11, 12, &c. yet they returned to it againe the second time, as we find in *Malachy*, who lived the last of the Prophets, and after this prayer of *Ezra*. For *Chap.* 2. 11. the Prophet sayes, *An abomination is committed in Jerusalem, for Judah hath married the daughter of a strange God:* and then followes the aggravation, *ver.* 13. *This ye have done againe*, that is, the second time, and in that respect are challenged to deale treacherously; and that also in respect they had repented of it the first time, *covering the Altar with teares, with weeping, and crying out,* as *Malachy* there speakes: so as *God regardeth not your offerings any more.* And therefore also *Psal.* 78. 40. *How oft did they* (saith he, as aggravating their sins) by murmuring *provoke the Lord?* and *Num.* 14. 22. God reckons up, and mentions the times of their sinning, how often they had thus sinned, as an aggravation of them, *They have tempted me these ten times.*

4. He may fall into the same sinne againe and againe, untill he hath recovered himselfe; and his peace fully, by a through repentance, but yet seldome after. *Lot* committed incest two nights together; but the orifice of his lust was not yet stopped by repentance; the wound was not closed, and so bled againe afresh; but when it is healed once, and the heart made perfect with God, and divorcing from that sinne, and entred into Communion with God againe, then, though it may fall out, yet a *Caution* 4.

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man more hardly returnes. A woman that is gone from her husband may play the whore a long while with him she ran away withall till her husband fetches her againe: but to runne often away, after receiving againe is intolerable. That is not so ordinary in Gods childe.

5. *Cont.* 5. Though we can hardly set limits to say when, or when not, this shall fall out by the degrees of mens repentings: as that if they have such or such a degree of repentance, that they fall no more: yet wee may further consider a difference of their returnings to God, and repentings; and of Gods speaking peace.

1. Of their *Repentings*: some are more imperfect and but as it were thawings of the minde a little, by meanes of a little Sunshine of Gods love: some are more thorow and deep; that recover a man, and put him into a sound and healthfull estate. As for example, a man in an ague hath well dayes, yet his fits returne, and it may be they leave him for a month or so; and yet they take him againe, as at Spring and Autumn; which is becaus all this while his body is not thorowly recovered to a state of health: so is it with a mans heart in respect of his lusts, though he may have many well dayes, wherein he may eate his meate, and receive sweetnesse in the Word, and ordinances: yet at this time his distempers and aguish fits returne, he being aguish still; but in the end, after the peace of God hath more thorowly established his heart, he attaines to some setled constant victory over it; and when it doth not prevaile to victory, such aguish fits end usually in consumptions, in which long agues often end: as in Temporaries, in whom, sinne overcomming Gods striving with them, it eates all good beginnings out: but if they belong to God, then usually that aguish distemper is in the end, by a more thorow repentance, so healed, as that they attaine to more victory, and security against it then any other sinne; that as in those other kinde of tentations, it often falls out, that, that which a man doubteth of most, he comes in the end to be most assured of, and to doubt no more; so also here, a man becomes most freed from that sin, he was long exercised with, of all other. So also

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in to be found: there are ſome kinds of ſpeaking peace by God, and meltings of the heart of his people, which yet are not of that force as to overcome, but wherein God doth but (as it were) ſtrive with them; which ſtrivings doe ever and anon work their hearts to a repentance, and that true, and ſerious: which yet is not ſo deep, and thorow, nor ſo healing the heart at the bottome, as it ſhould. For God ſometimes uſeth more imperfect kind of ſtrivings, even with his owne children, about ſome particular ſin they are to leave, which doe not ſo fully, at firſt, prevaile, and overcome in them; which God doth, to let them ſee the running iſſue of their natures, how grace would *runne* out of it, (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) and overcome grace in them, if he ſhould let it alone: and ſo, lets out upon his child after many yeers ſome luſt, which had beene long downe, which puts him to it exceedingly, ſo that he is in hazard to be undone, and is put into feares of it; and yet God viſiteth his ſpirit by fits, and *per intervalla* at times ſtrives with him; and though he falls, yet he puts under his hand, and gives him well dayes, and ſome comfortable viſitations; yet ſuch as are not deep enough to work him fully off from it. For, as God ſtrives with wicked men, ſo he ſometimes ſtrives with his owne alſo; which may ſeeme to be the true meaning of that ſpeech, *Gen.6.* where having mentioned the ſinne of his owne children, *verſe* 2. That the Sonnes of God tooke to them wives of that wicked ſeed of *Cain*, he ſayes, *My Spirit ſhall not alwaies ſtrive with man, for that* [*he alſo*] *is but fleſh:* He meanes not this of all mankinde, for he ſayes, [*he alſo*] is but fleſh: now, with what other creatures, doth he joyne them in this compariſon, but with others of the ſonnes of men? ſo as the meaning is, I ſee my Children, that they alſo are corrupt, and degenerate as well as the reſt of mankinde, and my Spirit hath ſtriven with them. In which ſtriving, God lets them ſee, how if he did not in the end, ſhew forth his free love to the full, in the reſcuing of them, and healing their backſliding, they would be undone: ſo as, in the end, through his grace which is ſufficient, they obtaine the greateſt conqueſt over that luſt of any other; when the heart is once thorowly awakened, and ſetled in a thorow peace. And as, thoſe doubts they were moſt troubled with once, (which though they had at times ſome Heb. 2. 1.

light againſt, yet by fits did ſtill ariſe) are yet in the end, ſo overcome, as they ariſe no more, but they enjoy the greateſt freedome from them: So it is often herein. And theſe *ſtrivings to not overcomming*, I reſemble to the thawing of the Ice, in a great froſt, as when in the day time, the Sunne ſhines, and in the Sunſhine it thaweth a little: but yet, ſo as at night, or in the ſhade it freezeth, when ſometimes, the weather alſo begins to change for a night, and yet falls a freezing againe: ſo here, there is not ſuch a thorow ſhedding abroad the love of God in the heart, as ſhould make a thorow generall thaw, to the purpoſe, as we ſay; and ſo, when the heat of that is withdrawn, it freezeth againe: but in the end there comes a more thorow and generall thaw, and change, that carries all away, melts the heart, and ſo alters the temper and conſtitution of the weather, (as I may ſo ſpeak) as it freezeth no more. And ſuch a thawing of his heart had *David*, when *Nathan* came to him, and not afore; though it may be he had thoſe leſſer relentings often before.

But let thoſe that are in ſuch a caſe, take *heed they be not hardened through the deceitfulneſſe of ſinne:* and of all the times that paſſe over you in your lives, theſe are the moſt climacteriall, and criticall, and moſt dangerous: For God *will not alwayes ſtrive*, but if thou beeſt his childe, if ſuch thawings will not doe it, he will uſe ſome great afflictions, in the end to divorce the heart, and thy *ſinne*; his love will one way or other overcome thee, and in the end prevaile. As when *Iſrael went on ſtubbornly in the way of his heart*, (ſayes God) *I have ſeen his Wayes and will heale him and guide him, Eſa.*57. and the Lord may ſo heale thee, as thoſe luſts of all other ſhall not in that groſſe manner, break forth any more. And in thoſe times, when God dealeth thus with him, a man will after ſay, that in ſuch paſſages of his life, he had more free love ſpent on him, then in all his life time, before or after; and when he is freed and healed, he will be more thankfull, and fearfull then ever before, or then otherwiſe hee would have beene; and ſo get ground by his ſtumblings. If any of you, being now in ſuch a conflict as this, in ſuch a viciſſitude and chance of war, if yet thou findeſt a conſtant fight againſt thy *ſinne*; and that thoſe breakings, and meltings of thy heart by God, doe win ground of it; and that the comforts, and hopes, which

which at times are vouchsafed, doe strengthen, *and establish thy heart in well doing*: as 2 *Thes.* 2. *ult.* and makes thee more fearfull, every time thou riseſt, then ever; ſo as to look upon another fit if it ſhould come, (which knowing the deceitfulneſſe of the heart, thou feareſt) as the fit of ſome great ſickneſſe, leſt it ſhould returne againe; eſteeming it as the greateſt croſſe that can befall thee; which thou wouldeſt buy off with thy blood; and bleedeſt moſt of all to thinke that thou haſt ſo unconſtant a heart, which as it hath abuſed Gods love formerly, ſo thou feareſt, will doe ſo againe; if thus thou goe on to fight it out, the love of God will in the end overcome in thee: but if thou findeſt that thoſe encouragements from God, doe through thy corruption, (which turnes Gods grace into wantonneſſe) nouriſh thy luſts, and make thee leſſe fearfull againſt the next time; and thy heart harder and ſecurer, and to ſlight *ſinne* more, becauſe thou haſt beene ſo oft viſited from on high, and pardoned: thy caſe is dangerous, and may prove deſperate.

6. Though he may returne, yet not preſently, *Luke* 5. *laſt. he that hath taſted old Wine, doth not ſtraightway drinke, and deſire new*: not whileſt the love of God, and the taſte, and reliſh of it is freſh in his mouth: when the impreſſion is worne out indeed, and begins to be forgotten, then haply he may returne.

Uſe. To conclude with the uſe of this point; If it be folly to runne into the ſame *ſinne*, though we repent of it afterwards: then what folly is it in them that utterly fall away; and after they *have beene enlightned, and taſted out of the good word of God*, then fall againe to the pleaſures of *ſinne*, and never repent of them? as many doe, that come, and try a little, what is in religion, and the wayes of God, and then returne againe to their vomits, and never returne to piety againe. *Fooliſh ſoules, who hath bewitched you? are ye ſo fooliſh, that having begun in the ſpirit, ye end in the fleſh?* as *Gal.* 3. 3. *Folly* indeed: to ſpend the harveſt of your time in ſeeking God, and then to leave him, when you are about to take leave of the pleaſures of *ſinne*. Alas poore ſoules, whither will ye goe? doe you ever thinke to have ſuch a *GOD* againe? *Thou haſt the words of eternall life*, ſaid the Diſciples to Chriſt: and as *Saul* ſaid to his ſervants, to keep them from falling away unto *David*; *Can the ſonne of Jeſſe give you vineyards, and make*

you Captaines of thouſands? 1 *Sam.* 22.7. So, can the world give you that peace that I can give you, may Chriſt ſay to you; yea and heaven beſides hereafter? Is the devill, with all the wages of *ſinne* you poſt after, able to make you amends? You thereby diſhonour God in returning to *ſinne*, and bring an evill report upon the good land; and diſcredit your Maſter in changing your ſervice; but withall you befoole your ſelves moſt: you *returne to folly*. For even that which you thinke to gaine the worlds good word and opinion by, even that you loſe: for, though they make a ſpoile of you, and triumph in ſuch, *and glory in their fleſh awhile*: yet they never think well of ſuch an one; nor truly love him. A backſlider, is like luke-warme water, having been once heated, which good men ſpue out, and evill men regard not; for what uſe can indeed be made of it? *Like ſalt that hath loſt* it's *ſavour, it is good for nothing but the dunghill.* Like one that hath beene married, but lives divorced; ſhe is undone for her marriage ever after. Such is the condition of thoſe that fall away and repent not: You who have but turned unto folly, and are not growne up to a deſpiſing and deſpiting Gods wayes, *Returne oh Shulamite, returne.* And you that have peace, and communion with God, take heed you doe not loſe him, you will never have ſuch a God againe.

FINIS.